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ABSTRACT

In response to the need for better trained teaching assistants to serve a growing undergraduate population, this project established a campus-wide Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP) at the University of California Riverside. Project efforts included inviting departmental participation in shaping teaching assistant (TA) seminar content; focusing seminars on "practical" instructional, testing and grading techniques; developing three "disciplinary cluster" seminars; fostering cooperative TA-faculty relations in the seminar's content; and inviting departments to develop their own TA training programs. In addition the project actively promoted TADP services and benefits in meetings with departments, in publications and memos, as well as successfully courting the campus press for favorable coverage of its events and services. Project results included public accolades from top administrators, funding for additional equipment for the next fiscal year, heightened campus commitment to teaching, reduced numbers of low-evaluated (problematic) TAs by 33 percent, and improved student ratings of first- and second-year TAs. In addition the project compiled a book of readings from other TA handbooks and newsletters and published an original TA handbook and a quarterly TA newsletter. Extensive appendixes contain correspondence and memos from the project, event announcements, evaluation forms, student evaluations, three issues of a TA newsletter, the Tadpole, and a quarter report for fall 1989. (JB)

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FINAL REPORT TO FIPSE

GRADUATE EDUCATION: TURNING GRADUATE STUDENTS INTO PROFESSORS

Grantee Organization: University of California, Riverside
Graduate Division
Riverside, California 92521

Grant Number: P116B80227-89

Project Dates: Starting Date: August 1, 1988
Ending Date: July 31, 1990
Number of Months: 24

Project Directors: Dr. Darold D. Holten
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FIPSE Program Officer(s): Brian Lekander

Grant Award:

Year 1	$53,716
Year 2	$59,737
Total	$113,453

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FINAL REPORT TO FIPSE

GRADUATE EDUCATION:
TURNING GRADUATE STUDENTS INTO PROFESSORS

Grant #P116B80227-89
August 1, 1988 - July 31, 1990

PROJECT SUMMARY

In response to unprecedented growth in the undergraduate population at the University of California, Riverside, and a mandate from the President of the UC System, the UCR Graduate Division undertook this project to establish the Teaching Assistant Development Program. During the two-year project period, the TADP organized and conducted new quarterly, interdisciplinary TA training seminars required of all first-year TAs, in addition to taking over from its parent Graduate Division responsibility for the annual, one-day TA Orientation, the annual TA Awards luncheon and quarterly TA evaluations. In addition, during its first year, the TADP compiled a book of readings from other TA handbooks and newsletters and, in its second year, published an original TA handbook and a quarterly TA newsletter.

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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PROJECT PRODUCTS

Quarterly TA newsletter, The TADPole (three issues appended)
Original TA handbook, Teaching Techniques: A Handbook for TAs at UCR (appended)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Title: Graduate Education: Turning Graduate Students into Professors

Grantee Organization: University of California, Riverside
Graduate Division
Riverside, CA 92521

Project Directors: Darold D. Holten, Ph.D. (714) 787-4302
Linda B. Nilson, Ph.D. (714) 787-3386

A. Project Overview: The project, which in essence was the establishment of the campuswide Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP), started in response to the need for better trained teaching assistants to serve a rapidly growing undergraduate population, as well as a mandate from the President of the University of California System to provide formal training to all first-year TAs. The TADP's major contribution was developing and conducting quarterly, interdisciplinary TA training seminars, including formative videotape evaluations, which were made mandatory for all new TAs. Not only were the TAs served, but so were the departments in a variety of ways. By the end of the project's second year, the outcomes were overwhelmingly positive: The TADP gained acceptance by virtually all departments and even some acclaim from top-ranking administrators; the campus's commitment to teaching was at least somewhat enhanced; the number of "problematic" TAs was drastically reduced; undergraduate evaluations of the quality of TA instruction rose; and the TADP became a permanent unit within the Graduate Division.

B. Purpose: The original purposes of the project, as proposed by Laurie Richlin, the project's and the TADP's first-year Director, were not only to improve the quality of TA instruction at UCR but also to better prepare tomorrow's professoriate. The latter purpose was ill conceived, however, as only two-thirds of the campus's TAs have even vague academic aspirations. So it was dropped from consideration. All efforts were shifted to TA training with the goal of improving TA instruction.

The operational definition of the quality of TA instruction also changed. Initially, the plan was to have the TADP staff evaluate videotapes of TAs conducting sections and to contrast the quality of TAs who had received training with TAs who had not. However, TAs and their departments strenuously objected to the treatment/no treatment experimental design and the unexpected videotapings of sections. So in the second year and for this final report, quality is measured solely by students' written, confidential evaluations of their TAs. While new TAs were videotaped as part of their training through this second year, the evaluations that followed were strictly formative.

In fact, the experimental design is just one of 13 administrative pitfalls that are discussed in detail in the report's **Project Description.** Given its mid-way change in directorship and administrative style, the project became an enterprise in "lessons learned" in the administration of a centralized TA training unit. In view of the project's

unusual evolution, Brian Lekander recommended taking this approach in this final report.

C. Background and Origins: The 1200-acre Riverside campus is the smallest (enrollment of 8200, including 1200 graduate students) newest (established in 1959) and most rapidly growing (8% a year average) of the nine University of California campuses. While it emphasizes research, the entire system was directed by the Office of the President to improve TA supervision, evaluation and classroom instruction, as recommended in the 1986 Final Report of the UC Task Force on Lower Division Education (Smelser Report). The 1988-89 budget for the Riverside campus included additional funds (approximately $35,000) earmarked for TA training.

The UCR Graduate Division already provided several TA development services: an annual one-day TA Orientation, an annual Outstanding TA Awards luncheon and a quarterly TA evaluation system with forms and data analyses of results. However, until it established the TADP, it offered no formal training or videotape evaluations of TAs, no TA handbook or newsletter and no individual development services. As of 1988, only five of the 30 departments trained their TAs.

As the campus holds the Graduate Division in high regard, departments generally accepted, even welcomed, its new policy requiring that they send their new TAs to the TADP for training and videotape evaluation. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) had been requesting TA training for at least a few years before. It was only the specific ways in which this policy was implemented the first year (1988-89) that aroused both departmental and TA resistance. As the TADP rectified these errors during its second year, departmental and TA support returned.

D. Project Description: As the original TADP Director left the project after its first 11 months, we cannot fully explain her reasons for the courses of action she took the first year. We do know, however, that she was committed to conducting an experimental research project on the effects of an interdisciplinary training/academic socialization seminar on the (videotaped) classroom performances of new TAs.

The Graduate Division's Associate Dean and the second (current) TADP Director (re-)defined the TADP as a service unit to departments and graduate students. Given that the heart of its services, TA training, was also required, it would have to be especially responsive and accommodating to its constituencies to establish and maintain good campus relations. This perspective underpinned the courses of action taken during the TADP's second year.

One course was correcting the first year's errors: inviting departmental participation in shaping seminar content; giving TAs sufficient notice of the upcoming TA Orientation and training seminars; exempting from the TADP seminars TAs who were to be trained in their departments or had extensive previous teaching experience; abandoning the experimental research design; leaving academic socialization to the departments; focusing the seminars on "practical" instructional, testing and grading techniques; replacing exams with seminar evaluation forms; developing (for the 1990-91 year) three "disciplinary cluster" seminars to replace the one interdisciplinary training curriculum; studiously fostering cooperative TA-faculty relations in the seminar's content; reducing the number of seminar meetings from ten to five (each two hours); inviting departments to develop their own TA training programs; and limiting the workload of the Master Teaching Assistants to the contracted 20 hours per week of TADP-related tasks only.

A second, more positive course of action was actively promoting TADP services and benefits in meetings with departments, in publications and in memos. These features of the TADP were emphasized: It took pressure off departments to train TAs; it guaranteed training for all TAs (in contrast to other campuses, which depended solely on departmental training initiative); it offered more teaching resources and services than any one department could afford; it assisted departments in developing their own program; it respected departmental programs and was available to help them improve; and it sought out opportunities to help low-evaluated TAs improve. In addition, the TADP successfully courted the campus press for favorable coverage of its events and services.

E. Project Results: While the TADP was unable to raise the English language competency of International TAs (data did not support its strategic proposals), it did succeed by its second year in: 1) gaining publicly expressed accolades from top University administrators; 2) winning funding for additional equipment and for the 1990-91 fiscal year (assuming that the State of California funds the campus's budgetary requests); 3) heightening the campus's commitment to teaching, at least moderately; 4) reducing the number of low-evaluated (problematic) TAs by 33% campuswide and by 50% in those departments whose TAs the TADP trains; and 5) raising students' evaluations of first- and second- year TAs on several dimensions, largely by reducing rating variance at the lower end of the scale (analysis on TADP-served departments only). It is not surprising, then, that the University is "adopting" the TADP as a permanent unit. The Director plans to publish the TA evaluation data analysis.

F. Summary and Conclusions: A campuswide TA development program is a feasible, cost-effective alternative to a multiplicity of departmental TA training programs, especially given the reality that many departments lack the human and budgetary resources, the critical TA mass and the interest to establish and administer their own such programs. No doubt, it is the only way to ensure that all TAs employed by a university receive some kind of formal training. Centralized training can also be highly effective--though perhaps not as much so as a solid departmental program can be--and need not generate conflict or competition with departments or their training programs. It is best housed in a graduate division/school, where a faculty-composed graduate council can lend a training requirement legitimacy.

As this project has yielded literally lists of right ways and wrong ways to set up and administer a centralized program, interested practitioners now have a well explicated plan of implementation to follow, with well identified pitfalls to avoid.

As a result of conducting this project, however, we recommend a disciplinary cluster TA training program--i.e., one with separate seminars for science TAs, social science TAs, foreign language TAs, etc.--over interdisciplinary training. With regard to appropriate classroom formats and activities, one size does not fit all. The TADP at UCR is expanding and specializing its seminar offerings accordingly.

FINAL REPORT
GRADUATE EDUCATION:
TURNING GRADUATE STUDENTS INTO PROFESSORS

Grant #P116B80227-89
August 1, 1988 - July 31, 1990

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project, which in essence was the establishment of the campuswide Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP), started in response to the need for better trained teaching assistants to serve a rapidly growing undergraduate population, as well as a mandate from the President of the University of California System to provide formal training to all first-year TAs. The TADP's major contribution was developing and conducting quarterly, interdisciplinary TA training seminars, including formative videotape evaluations, which were made mandatory for all new TAs. Not only were the TAs served, but so were the departments in a variety of ways. By the end of the project's second year, the outcomes were overwhelming positive: The TADP gained acceptance by virtually all departments and even some acclaim from top-ranking administrators; the campus's commitment to teaching was at least somewhat enhanced; the number of "problematic" TAs was drastically reduced; undergraduate evaluations of the quality of TA instruction rose; and the TADP became a permanent unit within the Graduate Division.

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D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As the original Director of the TADP left the project after its first 11 months, we cannot fully explain her reasons for the courses of action she took the first year. We do know, however that she was committed to conducting an experimental research project on the effects of an interdisciplinary training/academic socialization seminar on the (videotaped) classroom performances of new TAs.

The Graduate Division's Associate Dean and the second (current) Director (re-)defined the TADP as a service unit to departments and graduate students. Given that the heart of its services, TA training, was also required, it would have to be especially responsive and accommodating to its constituencies. This perspective underpinned the courses of action taken during the TADP's second year.

How does an academic support function, housed in the Graduate Division, establish its service mission with departments while requiring their new TAs to participate in a program under a mandate from the Office of the President? The inherent contradiction in requiring departments to avail themselves of a service can arouse their resistance, especially when that service impinges upon the departments' traditional control over the graduate curriculum.

A complicating factor at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) was the handful of departments that already administered their own TA training programs. In the 1988-90 academic year, these departments included Chemistry, English, Math/Computer Science (joint department), Music and Physics. The following year, they were joined by the Spanish Program of the Literatures and Languages Department. Are such departments best left on their own at the possible cost of quality control, or should their TAs be subject to double training duty at the cost of good will?

As the TADP tried diverse approaches over the two-year funding period, the lessons learned cover a broad spectrum of strategies and consequences. In general, the TADP's actions during its first year (1988-89) had divisive effects on its relations with departments, and those during its second year (1989-90) effectively closed the rifts and generated active cooperation. Let us first then examine the divisive "don'ts" that marred the TADP's initial months.

Lessons Learned I: Divisive Actions of the TADP

1. Introducing a New, Required Program Without Departmental Participation. In mid-September 1988, the previous Director sent a memo to all departments announcing that they were required to send their new TAs to a new ten-week training seminar beginning that Fall Quarter, conducted by the Graduate Division's new unit, the Teaching Assistant Development Program. At various times during that academic year, many departments expressed their resentment at the late timing and the "dictatorial," "imperious" tone of the notification, plus the fact that they had not been consulted on the seminar's scheduling or substance.

2. Giving the Participating TAs No Advance Notice. Having been informed so late themselves, the departments had neither the time nor the inclination to notify their TAs of their imminent new seminar requirement. While a limited rumor grapevine developed, most TAs first heard the news in an announcement by the previous Director at the 1988 TA Orientation on Friday, September 23, just a few days before the seminars were to begin. Reportedly, these TAs reacted with unpleasant surprise and resentment.

To add to the sense of disorganization at the TA Orientation, the TA handbooks that were to be distributed at the event were not fully assembled in time. Some chapters had to be handed out later in the day or later in the quarter; a few were never completed or distributed at all. Some TAs found the four-plus-pound, looseleaf handbooks too big and cumbersome to be useful and were not pleased that they contained almost exclusively reprints from other universities' TA handbooks and newsletters.

However, neither the Director nor anyone else affiliated with the TADP bears the blame for the lateness of the notification or the lack of opportunity for departmental participation. Unfortunately, the University's Graduate Division was not informed that the FIPSE grant proposal was funded until early September of 1988, even though the grant officially started August 1, 1988. We recommend, then, that FIPSE send out award notifications early enough to give recipients proper lead time and start-up time.

3. Requiring Departments That Already Had TA Training Programs to Send Their TAs to the Campuswide TADP Training Seminars. These departments felt that their ambitious pioneering efforts were being overlooked and discredited. They also resented their TAs' having to take double training seminars, as did many of these TAs themselves. While the 1988-89 Director was adamant about keeping these TAs in her program, Associate Dean Darold Holten later released the TAs belonging to most of the protesting departments.

4. Using TAs as Experimental Research Subjects. Both departments and TAs felt uneasy with the previous Director's procedure of giving training to some new TAs while denying it to others for the sake of her research design. Another part of the design, one that aroused genuine anger, was the practice of unannounced videotaping of TA sections, including of TAs who were not receiving training. In addition, those new TAs who were randomly selected for the no-training group were told to give back the (portion of the) TA handbooks they had received at the TA Orientation.

5. Teaching Other Subjects Under the Banner of TA Training. While university-level teaching techniques were covered in the TADP training seminars, the emphasis was on socialization into the academic profession, a career aspiration of only about two-thirds of the TAs. Some of the departments and their TAs voiced criticism over the misrepresentation of the seminar's content.

6. Teaching "Non-Practical" Educational Material. In addition to the focus on academic socialization, much of the teaching material covered was considered too theoretical and abstract by many departments and TAs alike. It is apparent that the TAs hoped to acquire a "tool box" of classroom and laboratory activities, testing strategies and grading techniques. Instead, they learned non-applied versions of educational and cognitive psychology and too little on testing and grading.

7. Testing the TAs on Their Learning--Rather Than Evaluating the Seminar. The previous Director reportedly prepared and distributed in-class objective exams at the beginning and at the end of each seminar. The questions addressed TAs' knowledge of the academic profession (e.g., the relative rankings of academic titles). A few departments complained that these exams were too long and time-consuming, "meaningless," condescending to the TAs and irrelevant to TA training. Certainly, testing TAs' knowledge in a training seminar is unusual procedure. In addition, some TAs voiced concerned that they themselves were "evaluated" but they had no opportunity to evaluate the seminars. Their point was particularly appropriate since the TADP and its training seminar were brand new.

8. Providing Only General, Interdisciplinary Training. Neither the departments nor most TAs felt that the one-size-fits-all interdisciplinary training adequately met their needs. In particular, the seminars failed to address teaching topics relevant to science lab sections and foreign language sections. While one of the Master Teaching Assistants (MTAs) was in foreign languages, none had a science background. (All, however, brought to the program a history of outstanding TAing).

9. Requiring Even Highly Experienced TAs to Take the Training Seminar. A small minority of the new TAs had over two years of teaching experience at other institutions

and, in a few cases, extensive undergraduate and/or graduate education in pedagogy. These TAs objected to having to take a TA training seminar, and their departments supported them.

10. Teaching Content That Strained TA-Faculty Relations. According to several departments, a small fraction of the seminars' content drove a wedge between TAs and their supervising professors--e.g., recommending that a TA should contradict a professor when the professor's lecture is clearly "wrong."

11. Making the Seminars Too Time-Consuming. During the 1988-89 academic year, each seminar met weekly for two hours for all ten weeks of the quarter. Each TA was also supposed to maintain a written teaching diary and to show up for two hour-long videotape evaluations. In actuality, few TAs ever turned in a diary, and only a minority were videotaped and evaluated even once. Still, so many departments objected so strongly to the 20 hours of seminar time that Associate Dean Holten promised departments that the TADP would cut the time back to ten hours (five two-hour meetings) starting in the Fall Quarter of 1989.

12. Not Explicitly Giving Departments the Option to Develop Their Own TA Training Programs. As the current Director discovered while visiting departments during Winter Quarter 1990, the previous Director must have left the impression with at least some departments that they were not permitted to initiate their own TA training programs. In fact, they have always had this option, but only six departments exercised it before or during the FIPSE funding period (Chemistry, English, Math/Computer Science, Music, Physics and Spanish). Once they were accurately informed, four more chose to do so starting in the Fall Quarter of 1990 (specifically, Art History, Dance, History and Statistics).

13. Overworking the Master Teaching Assistant Staff. During its first year (1988-89), the TADP employed three half-time Master TAs under the same contractual terms as departments employ half-time TAs. Such half-time appointments restrict the average weekly workload to 20 hours per week of course-related duties, or in this case TADP-related duties. The TADP's first Master TA staff, however, worked considerably longer than an average of 20 hours a week during most of the 1988-89 year, on both TADP-related and extra-organizational projects, including through designated vacation periods. Because the program was new and the Director was in a 60%-time position (a great deal of which was spent on travel), the MTAs had to assume additional hours of start-up and administrative responsibilities. But on top of these duties, they were also assigned many of the planning tasks for the Lilly Conference West, which the Director was coordinating and hosting. As the conference was held at the middle of March 1989, the bulk of the workload fell to the MTAs (and to some extent, the Administrative Assistant) during the Winter Quarter of that year. The tasks included assembly of invite lists, several mass mailings, a large amount of coorespondence, preparation of materials and food/lodging/entertainment/travel arrangements.

While the conference was a success, these extra, unofficial work burdens took their toll in several ways. Obviously, staff morale suffered considerably. So did the academic progress of the Master TAs. The TADP's and Graduate Division's operational budgets were depleted as well. Less obviously, the legitimacy of the

Graduate Division's efforts to enforce TA workload limits and to encourage written TA job descriptions was seriously undermined. If its TADP wasn't honoring its contracts, the Graduate Division was in no position to ensure that other units on campus did so. There was concern that such institutional violations would make UC Riverside vulnerable to TA union organizers. They had, in fact, succeeded in organizing a TA union at UC Berkeley (and later at UC Santa Cruz), and TA strikes have occasionally paralyzed the campus.

None of these problems was attributable to the Master TA staff or the Administrative Assistant. While all these individuals were more or less aware of them and attempted to bring them and possible solutions to the previous Director's attention, these difficulties lay beyond their authority to resolve.

Associate Dean Holten was not in a position to solve these problems either. He assumed his deanship just as the TADP and the FIPSE grant started. Administering the TADP was supposed to take only 2% of his time, and other Graduate Division responsibilities were even more pressing during his first few months. Further, as he lacked a TA development background, he deferred to the Director's expertise in the area--in particular, her endorsement of the interdisciplinary approach to TA training. Her perspective was informed by her graduate study in Education, a field that takes a highly theoretical approach to program design.

By the Winter Quarter of 1989, however, Dr. Holten had received a number of memos and phone calls from the faculty and departmental staffs raising questions and objections about the TADP's training approach and administration. To conduct a more systematic survey of campus opinion, he and the Director held meetings with the key representatives of each department (e.g., the Chair, the Graduate Advisor, the Graduate Secretary and, when possible, a few new TAs) during the Winter and Spring Quarters of 1989. What they heard in these exchanges comprise the first 11 of the 13 "Lessons Learned I" discussed above.

Toward the end of these meetings in April 1989, Dr. Holten also attended the UC Systemwide Conference of the President s Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Education, "Teaching Assistants and the University: Goals, Roles and Responsibilities. During this two-day event at UC Davis, he learned how the other UC campuses organized and conducted their TA training efforts, all of which relied on discipline-specific approaches and departmental participation and/or administration. They also placed tremendous value on faculty mentoring of TAs, an element lacking in UCR's program agenda.

With his new knowledge of other TA development programs, plus his increasing understanding of UCR departments' reservations about the TADP, Dr. Holten spent much of the Spring Quarter and the summer of 1989 planning major program revisions for the 1989-90 academic year. He also solicited the input of the 1988-89 MTA staff and the Administrative Assistant. His evolving new vision for TA training centered around the TADP's service mission to departments and their participation in program design. The specific changes that he deduced were needed are among the "Lessons Learned II" of the 1989-90 academic year. Motivating faculty mentoring of TAs is on the TADP agenda for the 1990-91 year.

Lesson Learned II: Conciliation, Cooperation and Complementarity Between the TADP and Departments

In its second year, the TADP repeated virtually none of the errors of the first year. The Graduate Division even replaced the TADP's Director with a former UCLA sociology professor who developed and for four years administered a model departmental TA training program. Associate Dean Holten and the new Director made the following immediate changes:

1. The TADP reinforced its sagging service image by inviting departments to help shape its 1990-91 disciplinary cluster curriculum. In her Winter Quarter 1990 meetings, the Director explicitly asked departments to recommend topics that the seminars should cover, especially but not exclusively on lab safety. She also requested their input in revising the TA evaluation forms and received several written responses.

2. New TAs received at least ten days' advance notice of the Fall 1989 TA Orientation and training seminars, and four to five weeks' notice of the Winter 1990 and Spring 1990 seminars--all by campus mail. For the Fall 1990 TA Orientation and seminars, the notifications were mailed to all new TAs' homes and departments seven weeks in advance.

3. TAs receiving departmental training and those with extensive previous teaching experience were exempted from TADP seminars.

4. No TAs were subjects in any experimental research project.

5. The TADP gave TAs instructional training only, leaving professional socialization appropriately to the departments. (TADP plans to initiate one or two afternoon workshops on the academic profession, but these will be strictly optional and available to all graduate students.)

6. The 1989-90 seminars focused only on "practical" instructional, testing and grading techniques that TAs could use in their sections.

7. No exams were given, and two-page seminar evaluations forms were distributed and collected on the last meeting of every seminar. Three-page evaluation forms were distributed and collected at the end of the TA Orientation as well. The forms requested numerical ratings of the various orientation and seminar "modules" and short answers to evaluative open-ended questions. The Director compiled, calculated and summarized the results every quarter and distributed summary sheets to the appropriate Master TAs, to key Graduate Division personnel and to FIPSE. (The Spring 1990 TA Training Seminar evaluation summary is enclosed with this report; Fall 1989 and Winter 1990 summaries were sent or handed in person to Brian Lekander near the end of the quarters.) These evaluations were taken very seriously, especially in redesigning of the seminars for the 1990-91 academic year.

8. To conform to the terms of the FIPSE grant, the TADP continued to provide interdisciplinary training. Predictably, TAs' recurring criticism of the seminars was the training's tangential relationship to their disciplines, especially to the lab sciences and

foreign languages. As an experiment, one of the Fall 1989 seminars, conducted by an MTA from Biology, was informally designated for science TAs. Not surprisingly, the seminar's overall evaluation scores were 6.0 and 6.3 on a seven-point scale--the highest attained during the entire year. In view of the TAs' preference for discipline-relevant training, the TADP will restructure its training into "disciplinary cluster" seminars--one for lab science TAs, a second for social science and humanities TAs and a third for foreign language and comparative literature TAs, beginning in the Fall Quarter of 1990.

9. The seminars studiously fostered cooperative relations between TAs and their supervising professors. In extreme conflictual circumstances, TAs were advised, in their own interests, to simply defer to faculty or to ask the TADP to mediate between both parties.

10. Seminar class time was cut in half from 20 hours to 10 hours (five two-hour meetings held weekly during the first five weeks of each quarter). Each TA was videotaped in section (or observed in a space-restrained lab) and evaluated by an MTA only once. In addition, the MTAs did not assign seminar homework, although they referred TAs to various chapters of the TA handbook for additional training material.

11. The TADP explicitly invited and encouraged departments to develop their own TA training programs, first in a January 9, 1990 memo (appended) and again in Winter Quarter 1990 follow-up meetings with department Chairs, Graduate Advisors and Graduate Secretaries. The memo included recommended components of a departmental TA training program, as developed by the TADP Director and approved by the Graduate Council in December 1989.

However, the TADP's policy avoided pushing departments out on their own. In fact, many of them lack the resources (e.g., available faculty release time) and critical TA mass needed to justify their own program, especially during the campus's rapid growth period. So the memo also explained their alternative: to continue sending their new TAs to the soon-to-be-improved TADP seminars.

Perhaps because of TADP's plan to innovate disciplinary cluster training, only two departments, Art History and History, had any interest in developing their own programs, and Art History already had a nascent program on which to build. The Director successfully urged Dance to develop its own and Statistics to join Math/Computer Science in an independent disciplinary cluster training program. The remaining 20 departments elected to stay with TADP. In fact, most of them expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming disciplinary cluster program and genuine gratitude for the TADP's existence.

12. The Master TAs were given no more than an average of 20 hours per week of TADP-related work, as formalized in a written job description, and no extra-organizational assignments at all. The program's willingness to honor its contracts with its graduate student staff no doubt contributed to its high morale and cooperative spirit during the 1989-90 year. In addition, the Graduate Division was on more secure ground trying to enforce the 20-hour-a-week limit and encouraging written TA job descriptions in departments. We believe that formalizing and honoring such contracts

prevents the kind of adversarial relations that incite TA unionization.

In addition to taking the "corrective" measures just described, the TADP initiated new services, publicized little-known existing ones and pointed out the program's benefits to further enhance its relations with departments, and the University community. The Director actively promoted these services and benefits in her Winter Quarter 1990 meetings with departments, in publications and in memos, especially the appended memo of January 9, 1990.

13. The TADP's centralized TA training was portrayed as taking the pressure off departments to add another program to their already strained administrative agenda. In fact, departments recognized this benefit without being told.

14. As a centralized TA training program made UC Riverside unique in the nine-campus UC System and highly unusual in the nation, the TADP enhanced the status of its parent Graduate Division and the University. Unlike other universities that depended solely upon departmental initiative, UC Riverside alone could guarantee that all new TAs receive a formal orientation and organized training; no UCR TA would fall through departmental cracks. In fact, TADP's unique centralized structure and services more successfully fulfilled the TA training mandate from the Office of the President of the UC System than did any other UC campus counterpart. As the Director becomes better integrated into the UC System and nationwide networks of TA and faculty development professionals, UC Riverside's TADP will acquire an increasingly broad reputation for its excellence and cost-effectiveness.

15. Via departmental meetings, phone calls, memos, its first flyer (appended) and its quarterly newsletter, The TADPole, the TADP publicized its service offerings to both departments and individual TAs. Some of the promotions emphasized the benefits of a centralized program--specifically, how all departments and all TAs can share in greater resources than any one department can afford (e.g., the newsletter, the TA handbook, the annual Outstanding TA Awards ceremony and luncheon, the annual TA Orientation, quarterly TA evaluation processing and the Teaching Resource Library of books, handbooks, reports, articles, newsletters and videotapes.)

16. The TADP actively courted the campus press for coverage of its major University-wide events: the TA Orientation in September 1989 and the Outstanding TA Awards ceremony and luncheon in May 1990 (program appended). The weekly campus newspaper, The Highlander, gave lengthy, favorable coverage to both events and printed a "Letters to the Editor" exchange between eight TAs (disgruntled over the one-day compressed training known as "Super Saturday" and the Director. The UCR Parents Newsletter also ran a 1200+word article, "Who Is Teaching Your Sons and Daughters," in its Spring 1990 issue. In addition, At UCR, a quarterly campus magazine distributed to the faculty, administrators and staff, plans to bring a lengthy feature on the TADP in its Fall 1990 issue.

17. Among the TADP's newest services was assistance to departments developing their own programs. This assistance included advice on various means to implement the recommended components of a departmental program, as well as special access to and copies of Teaching Resource Library material. The History Department availed

itself of these services most ambitiously; the Director even advised the staff on how to obtain its own Fall Quarter Master TA.

18. While, as a courtesy, the Director occasionally sent discipline-specific TA training materials to departments with their own programs, the TADP intentionally did not interfere with these programs. In September 1989, the Director met with their supervising faculty and judged them all at least acceptable. This hands-off policy served to re-establish amenable relations between the TADP and these six departments.

In late Winter Quarter 1990, however, Associate Dean Holten suggested that he and the Director discretely monitor the quality of four of these six programs--Chemistry, Math/Computer Science, Physics and Spanish--by inviting a group of their new TAs to an off-campus lunch, paid for by the Graduate Division. Knowing that their evaluations would be used only to improve their departments' programs, the TAs spoke very freely.

After each lunch, the Associate Dean and the Director wrote a memo to the key TA training personnel in each department. These memos are appended. Where appropriate, they heartily praised the programs or offered the TADP's services to help strengthen them. In response, Physics, the weakest program overall, invited one of the TADP's MTAs to conduct several training sessions during 1990-91 on topics its program overlooks.

19. The TADP continued to offer individual development assistance (personal consultations, classroom videotapings and formative evaluations) to TAs, on either their own or their department's request. But it sought potential clients more aggressively and more broadly across departments in its second year. Associate Dean Holten strengthened his "2.99 program," a special effort he formalized during the 1988-89 academic year to identify and offer individual help to TAs with low student evaluations (an overall rating of 2.99 or lower on a five-point scale). Whether such TAs were new or experienced and whether they were in TADP-serviced or independent departments, Dr. Holten contacted key faculty and requested that the department take at least one of the following measures: 1) deny the TA subsequent teaching assistantships; 2) provide the TA special help/retraining in the department; 3) refer an ITA (international TA) with English language problems to one or more specialized ESL programs run by the UC Riverside Learning Center; or 4) refer the TA to the TADP for individual development services.

In most cases, the departments appropriately selected the first or the third option. But in five cases during 1989-90 (about 15%), they referred their problematic TAs to the TADP. Typically, these TAs met first with the Director for a preliminary diagnostic analysis (30-60 minutes), then with one or two assigned Master TAs for a second and third opinion and initial suggestions for improvement (30-60 minutes). Depending upon the TA's anxiety level, classroom difficulties and progress, s/he would be observed and/or videotaped in section at least once and as many as three times within a period of two to six weeks. Following an in-class observation, the observer (the Director or the assigned MTA) sent lengthy, detailed written comments to the TA (cc'ed to the referring faculty member). After a videotaping, the TA was scheduled for

an hour-long viewing and evaluation session with the assigned MTA and, in some cases, the Director as well. Whether by memo or by phone, the Director kept the referring faculty abreast of all consultations with TAs, observation/videotaping dates, evaluation session results and observable improvements.

Samples of these communications are appended. The TADP is particularly proud that English drew so heavily on its services, as this department has administered its own TA training program for over ten years. Three of the four problematic English TAs turned out to be genuine TADP success stories; their evaluations jumped at least a full point after one quarter of individual development services. The fourth defensively refused help but planned to voluntarily give up her teaching assistantship for a fellowship. The results of the TADP's efforts to help the fifth case, an ITA from the Graduate School of Management, will not be in until the end of the Fall Quarter of 1990.

In the Fall Quarter of 1989, Psychology referred three experienced TAs to the TADP for lecture-style evaluation. None were problematic cases, so the TADP simply arranged for the videotapings and conducted routine evaluation sessions.

While faculty development does not fall within the TADP's domain, two faculty members, one from Sociology and the other from the Graduate School of Management, sought out the Director's instructional advice. She formally observed one of these individuals in lecture and followed up with an evaluation session, printed materials and another consultation several months later.

E. PROJECT RESULTS

By midway in its second year, the TADP had recovered from whatever "failures" it had suffered during its first year. Part I dealt with these and the program's recovery in detail. Here we will assess the TADP's overall impact on the quality of TA instruction, the campus's commitment to teaching and the University's opinion of the program and its mission, with emphasis on the second year, ending June 30, 1990.

Shortfalls: Saturday Training and ITAs

Happily, the TADP's overall failures were few, so we will dispense with these first. Only two are readily identifiable: 1) the compressed, one-day version of the five-week training seminar (called "Super Saturday"), which the TADP conducted once on September 22, 1989; and 2) the TADP's efforts to ensure that all TAs spoke easily understood English.

1) "Super Saturday," scheduled in the Spring of 1989, was an attempt by the previous Director to appease several departments that strongly objected to the ten-week, 20-hour training seminars required during 1988-89. The event was on five department calendars when the current Director arrived in September 1989. So she was obligated to honor the arrangements.

FIPSE received full details on "Super Saturday" last November in "End-of-Fall-Quarter Report to FIPSE: Turning Graduate Students into Professors" (copy appended).

But in brief, the event was exhaustingly intensive and much less favorably evaluated by the TAs than basically the same material presented in the regular five-week seminars. During her Winter Quarter 1990 meeting with departments, the Director asked the five "Super Saturday" subscribers if they would agree to the TADP's discontinuing the event. All five shared the same opinion as their TAs and TADP. So the "Super Saturday" failure will never be repeated.

2) UC Riverside's current graduate student population of 1200 includes 18% "internationals" from dozens of different countries. The highest concentrations of international graduate students are in the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (NAGS), followed by the Graduate Student of Management. But a sizeable number also pursue degrees in English and in foreign languages and literatures. About 70% of these international graduates students are awarded teaching assistantship for at least one quarter, and usually more, during their UCR student careers. Thus, the University's English language standards and the strength of its ESL programs decidedly affect the quality of undergraduate education.

Aside from training international TAs (ITAs) in instructional techniques, just as it does domestic TAs, the TADP has not played a central role in addressing ITAs' special needs and problems. Nor historically has its parent Graduate Division. Rather, two other campus units have assumed primary charge: 1) the Learning Center--more specifically, its English As a Second Language Program, which administers English language competency tests (Michigan and SPEAK), runs its own language lab and conducts non-credit classes in conversational English, writing, vocabulary, pronunciation and oral classroom communication, which is mandatory for ITAs who score below 250 on the SPEAK Test; and 2) International Services Center (ISC), which administers foreign student employment authorization, orients international students to the American social and university culture and holds social events to help them network.

As both of these units are campus "support facilities," they have only limited influence on academic affairs and TA assignments. In addition, their functions overlap, and not surprising, they occasionally conflict over "turf." The TADP Director studiously avoided becoming a third party in this fray. But she observed some ESL Program classes and favorable evaluated the testing administration, the curriculum and quality of instruction. So she collaborated with the ESL Program Coordinator in her efforts to raise and enforce the standards of the English language competency of ITAs.

The Director hoped to accomplish these objectives: 1) to raise the minimum graduate admission TOEFEL score from 550 to 600; 2) to divide TAships in two types, "instructional" with teaching responsibilities and "non-instructional" with grading, lab set-up, lab safety and handout/assignment preparation duties; and 3) to strictly enforce the minimum SPEAK test score of 250 for an instructional ITAship.

To proceed, the Director would need to obtain the support of the Graduate Council, and to do so would require research. So she first surveyed (by telephone) the other UC campuses to find out if their standards were higher than UC Riverside's. If so, the Graduate Council would feel justified in matching them. However, the results revealed UC Riverside's to be comparable to or higher than those at other UC campuses. She then attempted to correlate SPEAK Test scores with overall TA

evaluation scores. But her pre-test sample of almost 20 ITAs who were teaching in the Fall Quarter 1989 indicated an unexpected correlation near zero. These findings provided no basis to pursue the three objectives above.

Successes: Campus Relations and TA Performance

Admittedly, any "medal" is a success for a program as new as the TADP. Just establishing good relations with departments, particularly after they started out strained, was a major success for the TADP in its second year. But several incidences indicate that the TADP succeeded in generating considerable respect at the University's highest administrative levels.

Perhaps the greatest honor was the unsolicited January 22, 1990 letter from the UCR Chancellor, Rosemary S. J. Schraer, to the Director and her Administrative Assistant (appended). The letter praised the first edition of The TADPole and the program in general as "a pride of the campus." It was, in fact, only one--and the most prestigious one--of about a dozen unsolicited memos, notes and phone calls from various administrators complimenting the newsletter.

The Executive Vice Chancellor, Everly B. Fleischer, echoed this sentiment in May 1990 during his keynote address at the Outstanding TA Awards Luncheon (program appended). He called the TADP "the best [TA training program] in the UC System, perhaps the best in the country."

Finally, the TADP's Administrative Assistant, BJ (Barbara-Jean) Corriveau, received a 1989-90 Staff Performance Award, which carries a $1000 honorarium, in June 1990. While this award rightfully belongs to her as an individual, it is unlikely that the executive administration would have conferred it on a staff member of an ill-regarded unit.

We could add anecdotal and grapevine evidence of the TADP's increasing campus acceptance and approval. But the proof of any program's successful integration is the adequacy of its budgetary allocations. The Graduate Division funded the TADP's Spring 1990 requests for a Scantron [R] 8200 system to process TA evaluations and a new Xerox [R] copying machine lease. Even more importantly, the Chancellor's office funded the Graduate Division's requests for the 1990-91 TADP budget: two FTEs (Full-time Teaching Equivalent) for 12 quarters of Master TA salaries; hard-money funding of the Director's and the Administrative Assistant's salaries; and an operating budget comparable to the 1989-90 allocation.

Whether the University's increasing regard for the TADP translated into heightened commitment to its teaching mission is more difficult to ascertain. While the Director has not worked on the campus long enough to comment, Dr. Holten can speak from years of faculty experience in the Biochemistry Department. His impression is that the TADP has already impacted positively on the University's commitment to teaching. He considers The TADPole to be the major vehicle thusfar. Each of its quarterly issues has focused on a different teaching theme (e.g., teaching evaluations, time stress/management and grading), and all have been widely distributed and widely read. Dr. Holten also believes that it motivated the Office of Instructional

Development to initiate its own quarterly newsletter, Teaching Excellence, primarily for the faculty.

During the 1990-91 academic year, the TADP, under the auspices of the Graduate Division, plans to organize 1) a quarter-long graduate-level elective, a College Teaching Certificate Course, 2) three afternoon workshop on academic career matters, and 3) a faculty mentoring program to complement and enrich TA appointments. These programs should increase faculty interest and active participation in graduate education and teaching in general.

The TADP's impact on TA classroom performance is readily measurable, however, using the program's own data base of TA evaluations. Students in all discussion and laboratory sections--approximately 600 sections per quarter--complete these ten-item forms every quarter--blue forms for discussion TAs and green forms for lab TAs (both appended)--and add written comments as they desire. (These evaluations will be replaced with 14-item forms and will be analyzed on the new Scantron system beginning in the Fall Quarter of 1990.) The most important item--and certainly the most commonly used for comparison purposes--is the final summary item, "Overall is an effective teacher." As on the other nine more specific items, students rate their TAs on a 1-to-5 (highest) scale. For program assessment purposes here, we will use only this overall evaluation item.

The central question is the extent to which the TADP's training and consultation efforts improved the TAs' overall evaluations. Let us first examine the TADP's effects on TAs who needed its services most: those identified by Dr. Holten's "2.99 program" as needing special development help.

Part I already discussed the TADP's success advising three English TAs in this category. Another way to assess the TADP's effectiveness with problematic TAs is to compare their numbers over time. We know that any reduction in the "2.99 program" list could not be due to a decrease in the TA population, as it grows at least slightly every year (1%-5%). It would have to be the effects of 1) improvements in existing departmental TA training programs; 2) TADP training on new TA cohorts; and/or 3) individual TADP development services.

Table 1. Number of TAs (Sections) on the "2.99 Program" List by Quarter, 1988-90

	#TAs	(Sections)	Dept-Trained	TADP-Trained[1]
Fall '88	14	(16)	8	6
Winter '89	17	(19)	9	8
Spring '89	24	(27)	12	12
1988-89 Totals	55	(52)	29	26
Fall '89	16	(17)	10	6
Winter '90	9	(10)	7	2
Spring '90	12	(13)	7	5
1989-90 Totals	37	(40)	24	13

While the data in Table 1 indicate no positive trend during the 1988-89 academic year, they do show a marked 33% reduction in the "2.99 program" list from the TADP's first year to its second year. Further, this reduction was more dramatic (precisely 50%) in the "TADP-Trained" group, which, as the table footnote cautions, included a few totally untrained but experienced TAs during the 1988-89 quarters. By the 1989-90 year, however, all the TAs identified as "TADP-Trained" were, in fact, just that during either 1988-89 or 1989-90. The effect of the TADP's training on TA performance, then, has been unambiguously positive.

The data also indicate a modest year-to-year reduction of 17% in the number of department-trained problematic TAs. As we know of no improvements in departmental programs that would account for this change, we must credit Dr. Holten's "2.99 program," which involves departments (and occasionally the TADP) in a choice of remedial/corrective actions.

Now let us turn to the bigger picture: TADP's impact, if any, on TA evaluations in general. To best isolate TADP training effects, the evaluation data must eliminate TAs trained by their departments and should compare the evaluations of comparable experienced untrained TAs with TADP-trained TAs. So for this analysis, we will assess the difference in students' evaluations between untrained first-year and second-year TAs in the Spring Quarter of 1988 (before the TADP was established) and TADP-trained first-year and second-year TAs in the Spring Quarter of 1990 (two years after its establishment).

[1]As the TADP was established in Fall 1988 and trains only new TAs, some TAs identified as "TADP-Trained" may have started TAing before the program began and, therefore, may have received no training at all. With each successive quarter, however, it becomes more likely that these TAs have actually been TADP-trained.

Table 2. Statistical Analysis of Student Evaluations of First-Year and Second-Year TAs in Discussion and Laboratory Sections: Spring 1988 vs. Spring 1990

DISCUSSION SECTIONS		SPR 88[1] N=4826	SPR 90[1] N=6333	F Value[2]	PR>F	Std. Dev. Difference
Expresses self clearly	Mean	4.10	4.14	3.79*	.050	
	Std. Dev.	0.99	0.96			-.03
Provides goals	Mean	3.92	3.98	7.01*	.008	
	Std. Dev.	1.19	1.16			-.03
Shows concern	Mean	4.29	4.30	.42	.516	
	Std. Dev.	1.01	0.97			-.04
Encourages to say if puzzled	Mean	4.25	4.27	2.05	.152	
	Std. Dev.	1.04	1.00			-.04
Refers to students' ideas	Mean	4.04	4.01	1.33	.250	
	Std. Dev.	1.22	1.24			.02
Understands subject	Mean	4.39	4.36	2.88	.090	
	Std. Dev.	0.90	0.92			.02
Helps students organize material	Mean	4.03	4.01	.62	.429	
	Std. Dev.	1.16	1.16			.00
Indicates important points	Mean	4.19	4.19	.08	.772	
	Std. Dev.	1.10	1.09			-.01
Relates to instructor's goals	Mean	3.61	3.70	7.27*	.007	
	Std. Dev.	1.74	1.68			-.06
Overall effectiveness	Mean	4.19	4.19	.03	.872	
	Std. Dev.	1.05	1.05			.00
LABORATORY SECTIONS		SPR 88[1] N=1551	SPR 90[1] N=1517			
Shows how lab illustrates material	Mean	4.00	4.13	9.00*	.003	
	Std. Dev.	1.19	1.06			-.13
Develops goals	Mean	4.21	4.34	13.19*	.0003	
	Std. Dev.	1.06	0.93			-.13
Helps me evaluate data	Mean	3.95	4.03	3.54	.060	
	Std. Dev.	1.25	1.15			-.10
Points out wrong technique	Mean	3.95	3.97	.14	.708	
	Std. Dev.	1.19	1.17			-.21
Points out hazards	Mean	3.47	3.71	16.07*	.0001	
	Std. Dev.	1.79	1.58			-.21
Expresses self clearly	Mean	4.18	4.18	.02	.898	
	Std. Dev.	1.03	0.98			-.05
Understands lab	Mean	4.43	4.38	2.75	.097	
	Std. Dev.	0.92	0.92			.00
Points out experimental errors	Mean	3.73	3.83	4.03*	.045	
	Std. Dev.	1.50	1.38			-.12
Helps me understand principles	Mean	4.06	4.07	.01	.922	
	Std. Dev.	1.16	1.11			-.05
Overall effectiveness	Mean	4.26	4.23	.76	.385	
	Std. Dev.	0.97	0.96			-.01

1 N denotes number of student evaluations on a 1 (lowest)-to-five (highest) rating scale.

2 Df=1

* Significance level of .05 or lower

As Table 2 shows, TADP training affected TAs' mean ratings (1-to-5 scale) more in laboratory sections than in discussion sections. In discussions, training improved the evaluations on five of the ten dimensions, and did so significantly ($p < .05$) on only three of the five: "Expresses himself/herself clearly and precisely," "Provides goals and objectives in his/her presentations" and "Relates his/her presentation to the goals outlined by the instructor." In labs, however, training enhanced TAs' performance on eight of the ten dimensions, and on four significantly: "Shows how the labs illustrate course material," "Develops goals and objectives for the lab period," "Points out where health hazards are likely to occur and why" and "Points out where experimental errors are likely to occur and why." On no dimension did training have an even vaguely significant negative impact.

The last column, which gives the difference between the standard deviations of the Spring 1988 and Spring 1990 ratings, sheds some light on how TADP training raised the ratings that it did: on most dimensions, by reducing the variation in ratings. It only makes sense that training must have raised the ratings at the lower end of the distribution. In fact, our earlier findings on the success of Dr. Holten's "2.99 program" corroborate this interpretation. In other words, TADP training had primarily a beneficial "remedial" effect.

Not shown are the results of the general linear models procedure, repeated measures of analysis of variance, across all items for discussion and laboratory sections combined. The F value for the effect of year is 2.89 (df=1) with a significance level of .0889. While the F value fails to meet conventional standards for rejecting the null hypothesis, it does come very close. For assessment purposes, this result should not be ignored.

Given these favorable outcomes, and the mandate of the President of the University to train all new TAs, the Riverside campus intends to "adopt" the TADP as a permanent unit within the Graduate Division.

As this report is in process, however, the State of California is facing a $3.6 billion shortfall in State funds. The passage of the 1990-91 State budget was delayed for a month, forcing the UC System into a hiring and equipment purchases freeze and causing a multi-month delay in all 1990-91 UC appropriations. While the Chancellor guaranteed the salaries of the 1990-91 half-time Master TA staff last May, the hard-money salaries of the TADP Director and Administrative Assistant are pending final approval. As these salaries are the Graduate Division's top-priority new budget request, we are optimistic that the Chancellor will allocate funds for it.

If these optimistic assumptions hold true, the Director plans to write a paper for publication focusing on the results of the TA evaluation data analysis. She also hopes to develop one or more publications on the disciplinary cluster approach to campuswide TA training.

E. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This project shows that a campuswide TA development program offers a feasible, cost-effective alternative to a multiplicity of departmental training programs. In fact, it may be the only administrative means to guarantee that all new TAs employed by a university receive some kind of formal training. The fact is that not all departments are willing and able to set up and administer their own TA training

programs, even when they are solely responsible for TA development. The Director discovered this to be the case on the eight other University of California campuses, all of which rely on departments' training initiative. At best, the initiative was forthcoming from only two-thirds of the departments, even when a centralized unit funded or conducted the training.

The reasons why some departments shirk TA training are varied and understandable. On growing campuses, such as UC Riverside, or financially depressed ones, departments may lack the human and/or budgetary resources to run such a program. Even the least expensive program requires either faculty release time or some fraction of an FTE to fund a graduate student coordinator. In addition, departments on smaller size campuses may lack the critical TA mass to make the training effort practical. This is the case on the UC Riverside campus and in small, highly specialized departments in any university. Finally, some departments in large research-oriented universities--those with the largest number of TAs and the greatest dependence on them--simply lack a commitment to teaching excellence. Some key faculty members may even doubt that good teaching can be taught.

A centralized TA development unit circumvents these problems, and does so in a cost-effective, economical way. Rather than replicating resources and events across a campus, a centralized program can offer all TAs more for less. For example, at UCR all TAs share in the TA newsletter, the expanding Teaching Resource Library and Files of books, handbooks, articles and tapes, individual development consultations provided by the TADP staff, the TA handbook, the TA Orientation--resources much greater than any one department can afford.

In addition, as this project demonstrates, centralized training can be highly effective. It can improve undergraduates' evaluations of the quality of TA instruction, and the evidence is overwhelming that student evaluations correlate strongly with student learning. This is not to say that departmental training is less effective; a solid department program is probably optimal,. But in its absence, centralized training, even an interdisciplinary program, can significantly enhance TAs' classroom performance. It may even enhance graduate student-faculty relations by sparing departments the sensitive, potentially punitive role of evaluating their graduate students as instructors.

Furthermore, a centralized training unit can easily avoid competitive and conflictual relations with departments. With those that it serves directly, it must emphasize its service mission and invite departmental participation in program development. With those it does not directly serve, it must refrain from interfering in departmental programs or attempting to override them. Within these limitations, it can offer assistance and resources as long as the terms are "without obligation." In other words, no matter how expert its instructional professionals or how rich its resources, it should never ignore or try to undermine the departments' ultimate authority over its graduate students.

The advantage to housing a centralized TA training unit in a graduate division/school is that the latter, if well respected, can enforce the mandatory aspect of the training. Unlike an instructional development center, a graduate division can legitimize a requirement under the auspices of a graduate council, which represents the faculty and therefore departments.

As this project has yielded literally lists of right ways and wrong ways to set up and administer a centralized program, interested practitioners now have a well explicated plan of implementation to follow, with well identified pitfalls to avoid.

As a result of conducting this project, however, we recommend a disciplinary cluster TA training program--i.e., one with separate seminars for science TAs, social science TAs, foreign language TAs etc.--over interdisciplinary training. With regard to appropriate classroom formats and activities one size does not fit all. The TADP at UCR is expanding and specializing its seminar offerings accordingly.

G. APPENDICES

RIVERSIDE: THE GRADUATE DIVISION
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRA
1110 LIBRARY SOUTH
EXTENSION 3386

January 9, 1990

To: Department Chairs
Graduate Advisors
Graduate Secretaries

From: Dr. Linda B. Nilson, Director LBN

Subj: Departmental Options for 1990-91 Teaching Assistant Training

We would like to inform you of your department's options for providing your new TAs with formal training, as mandated by the Office of the President of the University of California.

The information in this memorandum reflects two new developments on this campus: 1) The Graduate Council Committee on Courses and Programs recently approved recommended components for departments to include in their own TA training programs. 2) Beginning Fall Quarter 1990, the TADP is restructuring its TA training seminars to add more disciplinary relevancy to the pedagogical skills we impart to your new TAs.

Option 1: Your Own Departmental TA Training Program

The Graduate Council Committee on Courses and Programs and the TADP concur that the most effective and relevant TA training is discipline-specific and is anchored in the departments. Several departments at UCR already administer quality TA training programs. Other departments that are interested in this option are encouraged to follow the recommendations below in developing and administering their own programs. These recommendations are consistent with those developed, endorsed and prioritized by the President's Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Education (PACUE). The Graduate Council will review departmental programs for overall compliance.

The following are the recommended components of a departmental TA training program:

1) The TA training course, designated 301, should be required of all first-year TAs. TAs should receive appropriate graduate-level credit for the course.

2) The course should convene as a class or a seminar on a schedule left to the department's discretion. Formal faculty mentoring may comprise a component of the course.

3) The Faculty Supervisor of the course should send a course syllabus to the TADP office on an annual basis.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—(Letterhead for interdepartmental use)

4) TA attendance should be enforced in a meaningful way.

5) The training should include at least one videotaping of each TA or some similar observational component, followed by formative feedback to each TA by the Faculty Supervisor and/or other TAs. (The TADP can provide appropriate formative evaluation forms upon request.)

6) A department may wish to exempt a TA from the TA training course requirement if he/she can provide documentary evidence of significant teaching experience in the same or a related discipline at the high school or college level.

All new TAs still must attend the Graduate Division/TADP's annual TA Orientation, a full-day event held during Fall Quarter registration week. But their attending an approved departmental TA training course will exempt them from all other TADP training activities. In addition, TADP will continue to administer quarterly student evaluations of TA sections.

The TADP welcomes departments to draw on its expertise and resource library for advisement and assistance in developing and administering their own departmental TA training programs and in counseling TAs with special development needs.

Even with TADP advisement and assistance, developing and administering a TA training program may cost a department more faculty and staff time and energy than it can afford. This may be especially true of departments with rapidly growing undergraduate enrollments and/or relatively few new TAs to train each year. These departments are welcome to continue to refer their new TAs to TADP's training seminars, which are described below.

Option 2: TADP's New "Disciplinary Cluster" Seminars

We are pleased to announce that the TADP is restructuring its TA training format to better meet our TAs' complex pedagogical needs. Beginning Fall Quarter 1990, rather than conducting just one interdisciplinary training seminar for all first-quarter TAs, the TADP will offer three "disciplinary cluster" seminars, each designed to impart the teaching methods and techniques most appropriate in different disciplinary groups. Each TA will enroll in the seminar that addresses his/her department's subject matter and section formats.

The following disciplinary cluster seminars will be offered each quarter during the 1990-91 academic year:

1. **"Running a Science Lab Section"** for TAs in the laboratory sciences, including physiological psychology

2. **"Running a Discussion Section"** for TAs in the social sciences, psychology (except physiological), philosophy, education and management/business administration

3) **"Running a Foreign Language Section"** for TAs in Literatures and Languages

Each seminar will have more than one section as needed. In addition, all new TAs running lab sections will be observed and evaluated by a TADP Master Teaching Assistant, and all new TAs running discussion or foreign language sections will be videotaped and evaluated by a TADP MTA.

This disciplinary cluster approach offers a cost-effective means of meeting TA training needs on a relative small scale but departmentally diverse campus such as ours. It represents a genuine innovation in TA training nationwide, which we are proud to debut at UC Riverside.

Planning Meetings for 1990-91

After you consider these two options, I would very much like to have a meeting in your department to discuss these matters in detail and to answer any questions you might have regarding special concerns in your area. BJ Corriveau, my Administrative Assistant, will arrange through your Graduate Secretary for a convenient time to schedule this meeting. I expect that one half-hour should be ample time and would like the meeting to include the Department Chair, the Graduate Advisor(s) and the Graduate Secretary. BJ will begin contacting each department in about one week.

Thank you for your thoughtful review of these TA training options. Should you have any questions, please call our office at extension 3386.

LBN/bjc

December 4, 1989

To: The Graduate Council Committee on Courses and Programs

Fr: Dr. Linda B. Nilson, Director
Teaching Assistant Development Program

Re: Revised Recommendations for Departmental TA Training Programs;
Committee Review and Approval Requested

In 1987 the Office of the President mandated that all new Teaching Assistants in the University of California system receive formal training in college teaching. At UC Riverside, TAs may receive this training from the Teaching Assistant Development Program or from their respective departments. Several departments at UCR already administer quality TA training programs. Other departments that are interested in this option are encouraged to follow the recommendations below in developing and administering their own programs. These recommendations are consistent with those developed, endorsed and prioritized by the President's Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Education (PACUE). The Graduate Council will review departmental programs for overall compliance.

The following are the recommended components of a departmental TA training program:

1) The TA training course, designated 301, should be required of all first-year TAs. TAs should receive appropriate graduate-level credit for the course.

2) The course should convene as a class or a seminar on a schedule left to the department's discretion. Formal faculty mentoring may comprise a component of the course.

3) The Faculty Supervisor of the course should send a course syllabus to the TADP office on an annual basis.

4) TA attendance should be enforced in a meaningful way.

5) The training should include at least one videotaping of each TA or some similar observational component, followed by formative feedback to each TA by the Faculty Supervisor and/or other TAs. (The TADP can provide appropriate formative evaluation forms upon request.)

6) A department may wish to exempt a TA from the TA training course requirement if he/she can provide documentary evidence of significant teaching experience in the same or a related discipline at the high school or college level.

All new TAs must still attend the Graduate Division/TADP's annual TA Orientation, a full-day event held during Fall Quarter registration week. But their attending an approved departmental TA training course will exempt them from all other TADP training activities. In addition, TADP will continue to administer quarterly student evaluations of TA sections.

The TADP welcomes departments to draw on its expertise and resource library for advisement and assistance in developing and administering their own departmental TA training programs and in counseling TAs with special development needs.

LN/bjc

TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 1989 - 90

TA TRAINING SEMINAR EVALUATION FORM

MTA: JADIS BLURTON

Please answer the following questions as honestly and thoroughly as you can. Your responses are completely confidential. They will be summarized and used to improve the UCR TA Development Program in the future. Thank you very much for your feedback. The TADP staff regards it as very valuable.

Please return your completed form to your MTA before you leave the final seminar session.

A. Circle the number which best describes your opinion of how well presented each part of the TA Training Seminar was.

1 = Poorly presented
7 = Excellently presented
NA = Did not attend
COMMENTS MADE IN MARGIN

N of TA respondents = 8

	NA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	MEAN
1. Preparation for a First Day (Jadis Blurton)	2				1		3	2	6.00
2. Setting the Classroom Atmosphere (Jadis Blurton)	2					2	2	2	6.00
3. Control in the Class (Jadis Blurton)	2				1	1	3	1	5.67
4. Communication in the Classroom (Merri Lynn Lacey)				1	2	3		2	5.00
5. Teaching to Different Processing Styles (Linda Nilson)						2	5	1	5.88
6. Motivating Students (Jadis Blurton)					2	3	1	2	5.38
7. Open-Ended Discussions vs. Problem-Solving (Elsa Valdez)				1	1	4	2		5.63
8. Preparing Students for Tests (Merri Lynn Lacey)	1			2		2	3		4.86
9. Preparing Tests for Students (Merri Lynn Lacey)	1			2		1	4		5.00
10. Handling Troubled Students (Alan Oda)	1					2	3	2	6.00
11. Grading Written Assignments and Essay Exams (Alan Oda)	3					2	2	1	5.80

	COMMENTS MADE IN MARGIN	NA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	MEAN
12. Alternative Teaching Strategies (Alan Oda)		3					1	2	2	6.20
13. Seminar as a Whole		NA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
						1	1	5	1	5.75

B. Circle the number which best describes how useful you have found each part of the TA Training seminar in improving your teaching.

1 = Not useful at all
7 = Extremely useful
NA = Did not attend

		NA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. Preparation for a First Day (Jadis Blurton)	Had already had first class (before seminar began 4/2/90)	2	1				2	1	1	4.80
2. Setting the Classroom Atmosphere (Jadis Blurton)		2			1	1	1	3		5.00
3. Control in the Classroom (Jadis Blurton)		2			1	2	1	2		4.67
4. Communication in the Classroom (Merri Lynn Lacey)			1				4	2		4.71
5. Teaching to Different Processing Styles (Linda Nilson)				1		2	1	3	1	5.00
6. Motivating Students (Jadis Blurton)						1	4	2	1	5.38
7. Open-Ended Discussions vs. Problem-Solving (Elsa Valdez)					1	5	2			4.13
8. Preparing Students for Tests (Merri Lynn Lacey)		1			1	1	2	3		5.00
9. Preparing Tests for Students (Merri Lynn Lacey)		1		1		2	1	3		4.71
10. Handling Troubled Students (Alan Oda)		1				2	2	2	1	5.29
11. Grading Written Assignments and Essay Exams (Alan Oda)		3			2			3		4.80
12. Alternative Teaching Strategies (Alan Oda)		3			1			2	2	5.80
13. Seminar as a Whole				1		1	2	2	1	5.00

C. Did the seminar ignore or underemphasized any topics that you consider very important for good TAing? If yes, which topics?

No. Not enough science techniques; should have physical science (chem, physics).

N/A. No. Not enough emphasis on the laboratory environment. No.

D. What topics, if any, were overemphasized? Preparing tests for students. Too much time. I found the "Processing Styles" talk very interesting but not very practiceable in my class. N/A. Generally geared toward upper division discussion-type teaching. Remaining distant from the class.

E. What were the very best parts of the seminar? Please see "E" below.

F. What were the most important things you learned or gained from the seminar?

Please see "F" below.

G. How could the TA Training seminar be improved? More group participation. It's great to have live interaction but some carefully made videos would be nice; also chemistry and physics TAs would be helpful for a different point of view. Strategies for conducting labs could be included. More emphasis on teaching in the social sciences and humanities. C & D say it all!

I came here to learn something. Nobody forced me to come. I had hoped to find something useful to make me a better teacher. This seminar did all of the above. My eyes were opened up to many new things which I feel will make me a better teacher. Most of those things listed above which I rated were in some way new, or if not new, gave me new insight into old problems. Thanks.

I felt that most of the time spent in the training seminar would be more applicable for entering freshmen education majors; as it was most of the material was either obvious or useless.

E. Teaching to Different Processing Styles and Motivating Students. I enjoyed Teaching to Different Processing Styles. I learned something from every seminar I went to. Preparing for the class, conducting classes/labs, motivating students, preparing tests. Alan Oda's presentation on troubled students was outstanding.

F. Became aware of the different teaching styles. How to handle troubled students; motivating students was OK but too much time. The importance of using the chalkboard, motivating students, alternative ways of teaching, how to communicate/establish rapport with students. Gave better confidence in facing students; to become a better TA. An understanding of how to deal with problem students, and alternative teaching techniques.

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November 6, 1989

To: Graduate Chairs
Graduate Advisors
Graduate Secretaries

Fr: Darold Holten, Associate Dean, Graduate Division D.H.
Linda Nilson, Director, TA Development Program LN

Re: TADP's Continuing TA Development Services

In case you do not already know, the TADP not only provides TA training for departments that do not administer their own programs, but also offers individualized follow-up development for experienced TAs with low student evaluations.

All departments are invited to avail themselves of our follow-up services. The TADP is particularly interested in helping TAs whose overall TA evaluation averages 2.9 or lower. Please feel free to refer these TAs to the TADP office after you review the quarterly TA evaluations and determine the skill needs of individual TAs. The TADP will provide specialized training in the areas your department recommends as well as a progress report on each TA.

LN/bj

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—(Letterhead for interdepartmental use)

University of California, Riverside

TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1110 LIBRARY SOUTH (714) 787-3386

Under a mandate from the Office of the President of the University of California, the UCR Graduate Division established the Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP) in 1988 to orient new TAs to their position and to train them in research-grounded teaching techniques. The TADP has since expanded its functions to serve experienced TAs, departments and interested faculty. Its events and services include:

THE CAMPUSWIDE TA ORIENTATION is an annual, full-day event for all new TAs. It covers instructional policies in the morning general sessions and interdisciplinary teaching topics in the afternoon workshops.

DISCIPLINARY CLUSTER TA TRAINING SEMINARS instruct new TAs in the pedagogical methods and teaching formats most appropriate to their disciplines. In addition to attending five two-hour training sessions, each TA is videotaped or observed in section and scheduled for a private, hour-long consultation and formative evaluation. The TADP offers three disciplinary cluster seminars: one for science TAs, one for social science and humanities TAs and another for comparative literature and foreign language TAs--the first two on a year-round basis. Graduate credits are available under departmental 301 courses. These seminars enroll all first-quarter TAs not trained in their departments.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE TO DEPARTMENTAL TA TRAINING PROGRAMS is provided upon request to graduate program faculty and staff. The TADP advises and assists departments that wish to institute their own TA training programs or upgrade their existing ones. It also designs and conducts special training sessions and workshops for these programs.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES are furnished to both new and experienced TAs on departmental referral or on individual request. These services include evaluative classroom observation/videotaping, review of lesson plans and materials and private instructional consultation. All are provided on a confidential basis and are tailored to each individual's specific needs.

THE TEACHING RESOURCES LIBRARY is an ever-growing collection of books, handbooks, reports, articles, newsletters and videotapes on all facets of university teaching practice, evaluation, administration and career development. Many materials are specific to the various disciplines.

TA EVALUATIONS are conducted every quarter on all discussion sections, laboratory sections and TA-taught courses in the University. The TADP designs, distributes and processes the forms--over 52,000 each year--and prepares evaluation summaries for the departments and the TAs. It also identifies TAs with special development needs and offers individual services to meet them.

THE TA AWARDS LUNCHEON is an annual Spring Quarter event honoring TAs selected by their departments as outstanding instructors. The TAs are awarded framed certificates of recognition, and their names are engraved on departmental plaques.

TADP PUBLICATIONS include the quarterly newsletter, The TADPole, and the UCR TA handbook, Teaching Techniques, which is distributed to all new TAs at the TA Orientation.

fcopy

RIVERSIDE. THE GRADUATE DIVISION
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
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April 9, 1990

To: Department of Literatures and Languages
William W. Megenney, Chair
Henry Decker, Vice Chair
Kemy Oyazun, Spanish Program Director
Mercedes Jimenez, Lecturer in Spanish
Gwen Yount, Lecturer in Spanish
Sandra Roberson, Graduate Secretary

From: Darold Holten, Associate Dean, Graduate Division D. H.
Linda B. Nilson, Director, TA Development Program LBN

Re: March 25 Luncheon with Spanish TAs

Thank you for the opportunity to take some of your TAs to lunch on Friday, March 25. We learned foreign language teaching methods and aspects of language acquisition theory that we didn't know existed and that we found genuinely exciting. When Dr. Jimenez conducts a foreign language teaching workshop for our Master Teaching Assistants next September, we won't be completely in the dark. Your TAs gave us enough background in two hours to allow us to start planning our disciplinary cluster TA training seminar for new Literatures and Languages TAs who are not in the Spanish Program.

The Spanish TAs had nothing but the greatest of appreciation and praise for Dr. Jimenez's and Dr. Yount's TA training courses. Together, they cover applicable material from the most innovative learning theories to the most concrete techniques for teaching grammar and vocabulary. We'd like to commend them both for developing a superb departmental TA training program and to thank Dr. Jimenez for so kindly agreeing to help train next year's MTAs.

DH/LN/bj

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA — Letterhead for interdepartmental use

April 12, 1990

To: Mathematics/Computer Science Department
Albert R. Stralka, Interim Chair
John Walsh, Graduate Advisor
Louis J. Ratliff, 1989-90 TA Training Supervisor
Cathy Holley, Graduate Secretary

From: Darold Holten, Associate Dean, Graduate Division DH
Linda B. Nilson, Director, TA Development Program LN

Re: April 6 Luncheon with Mathematics/Computer Science TAs.

Thank you for the opportunity to take three of your TAs to lunch at the Bengal Kitchen last Friday. They were a delightful and most informative group of young scholars.

All three praised both the structure and the substance of Professor Ratliff's and Professor Stralka's TA training programs. They agreed that, between the group meetings and the TA section visitations, the programs have been very effective and responsive to their instructional needs. We are pleased to forward to you the few suggestions for improvement that were offered.

The TAs we talked with found that the TA section visitations became repetitious after a couple of quarters, especially for the better TAs. So you might consider reducing or even deleting the visitation requirements after a quarter or two, at least for those TAs who quickly master the teaching craft.

The TAs also felt that it would enhance the attitude and the learning of their non-major students if TAs were able to illustrate the material on problems more relevant (applied) to the students' interests. For example, the TAs would like to use some engineering problems with engineering students and some business problems with business students. They realize, of course, that department resources are short, but they thought that Fundamentals of Mathematics and Calculus for Business Majors were well received and might be reinstated.

The main point, however, is that your department deserves commendation for developing and administering a fine TA training program. We wish you continuing success. If there is any way that we might further enhance your program or lighten some of your tasks, please feel free to contact or visit the TADP office. We have enclosed our flyer for your information.

DH/LN/bjc

Attachment

file

RIVERSIDE THE GRADUATE DIVISION
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
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EXTENSION 3386

March 15, 1990

To: Benjamin C. Shen, Chair, Physics Department
Nai-li H. Liu, Graduate Advisor
Rosen Dandaloff, Physics 301 Instructor
Linda Myers, Student Affairs Assistant

From: Darold Holten, Associate Dean, Graduate Division
Linda B. Nilson, Director, Teaching Assistant Development Program

Re: March 9 Lunch with Physics TAs

We'd like to thank you for arranging for several of your TAs to lunch with us Friday, March 9. Five of the seven--specifically, David Seidel, James Letts, Raymond Hall, Barbara Reyes and Thorsten Heuhn--showed up at the TADP office before 12:15 p.m, by which time we had to leave to make our reservations at the Bengal Kitchen. They were a most articulate and thoughtful group and offered very valuable advice on designing next year's TADP training seminar, "For the Science TA."

In the course of the conversation, the TAs commented on the Physics Department's 301 course. They praised it for allowing them to prepare their problem review sections and for providing valuable feedback. But they all voiced a preference for some variation in course format and for inclusion of these instructional techniques and related topics:

How to Conduct Lab Sections
How to Conduct Sections in a Course for Non-Majors
How to Lead Discussions
How to Relate to Students
How to Motivate Students
How to Handle Angry, Disgruntled and Emotionally Distressed Students
How to Prevent Cheating and What to Do When It Happens
How Cognitive/Educational Psychology Can Improve Teaching
What to do in the Event of an Earthquake, Fire or Other Disaster in the Physics Bldg. (Best handled by Environmental Health & Safety)

In addition, the TAs expressed an interest in having their sections videotaped and evaluated at least once during their first quarter as a TA.

We must say that we were a little surprised, and very pleasantly so, at your TAs' strong interest in teaching and self-improvement. We also understand that you may not be able to incorporate these topics into Physics 301. In fact, to do so might be redundant. They are already covered in the TADP-administered TA training seminars and will be in next year's new seminar for science TAs.

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So we'd like to offer you two possible alternatives to serve your TAs' needs next year. We can either: 1) invite your TAs to attend our science TA seminar on a strictly drop-in, voluntary basis (sessions held weekly for two hours during the first five weeks of each quarter); or 2) send one of our Master TAs to conduct several Physics 301 sessions on some or all of the topics above. We can also advise your department on how to schedule videotapings with Sherry Pope in Media Resources and can make our MTAs available for videotape evaluation sessions.

Please let us know what you think of these alternatives and what other ways we can better serve your TAs.

Thank you.

LN/bj

RIVERSIDE THE GRADUATE DIVISION
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
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April 30, 1990

To: Chemistry Department
Dallas L. Rabenstein, Chair
Michael Rettig, Vice Chair
M. Mark Midland, Graduate Adviser
William Orttung, Chemistry 301 Professor
Jackie Patterson, Administrative Assistant

From: Darold Holten, Associate Dean, Graduate Division D.H.
Linda B. Nilson, Director, Teaching Assistant Development Program LBN

Re: April 20 Lunch With Chemistry TAs

We'd like to thank you for the opportunity to take six of your TAs to lunch on Friday, April 20. Since we had a sizeable group--eight of us in all--we went to Shakey's for their buffet.

These TAs are very pleased with your departmental training program, and we hope to borrow a few of your training techniques for the TADP disciplinary cluster seminar designed for other science TAs. They especially appreciated the thorough lab safety training and the chance that your 301 course affords to overcome stagefright. We'd like to pass on to you the very few suggestions for improvement that they offered.

While all the TAs found the Project Teach videotapes very helpful, they were sometimes amused by the late 60s and early 70s clothing and hairstyles. Not that any of us can do anything about this. But we can hope that the University of Nebraska updates their otherwise fine productions.

A couple of TAs suggested that 301 TAs have their lecture presentations evaluated not just in discussion afterwards but also with printed questionnaires. Apparently some TAs are reticent to express constructive criticism orally but would do so on an evaluation form. In addition, the TAs sometimes forget all the evaluative dimensions they are supposed to consider, and a questionnaire would remind them. If you'd like, the TADP would be more than happy to provide you with the form we use to formatively evaluate TA videotapes, or to help you develop your own items.

Your TAs must develop a strong esprit de corps because they were genuinely concerned about the one or two TAs per year who begin their teaching assistantships in Winter or Spring Quarter and thereby miss the Fall training course. If the TADP can help this situation by inviting these TAs to attend our science cluster seminar, please let us know. We can't provide the same discipline-specific and lab-specific training. But we do cover <u>general</u> lab safety, lab lecturing, lab report grading and the like.

The only teaching topic on which your TAs would like more coverage is motivating students to ask questions and to respond to discussion questions. Too often, the TAs

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA — (Letterhead for interdepartmental use)

students to ask questions and to respond to discussion questions. Too often, the TAs told us, they face too calm a sea of faces and don't know how to stir it up. If you'd like to cover this issue in your 301 course, the TADP may be able to help you in any of a number of ways:

1) We can provide you with materials to develop your own presentation.
2) We can recommend that you invite Dr. Pamela Clute from the School of Education to speak on motivating students' interest in science. Her specialization is science and math education, and she is a superb public speaker.
3) We can provide you with a videotape of one of Dr. Clute's presentations. Currently, we have a 75 minute tape of her 1989 TA Orientation afternoon workshop. After September 21, the day of our 1990 TA Orientation, we will have a tape of her 60-minute presentation.
4) We can send a TADP Master Teaching Assistant to make a presentation during a 301 meeting.

Unless your department objects to the procedure, we'd also like to urge you to provide TAs with copies of their numerical TA evaluation results, in addition to the typed copies of the students' written comments. The TAs we talked with were puzzled that they had not seen their Fall 1989 numerical ratings. Let us add that, starting in Fall 1990, we will be sending you new and, we believe, much improved TA evaluation forms and will be processing them through our new Scantron system. So you should receive the TA evaluation summaries much more quickly starting next year.

We'd like to compliment you on the quality of your departmental TA training program and thank you again for loaning us your TAs as disciplinary cluster "consultants." Please don't hesitate to contact the TADP for assistance on any new TA training project.

OUTSTANDING TA AWARDS LUNCHEON

SPONSORED BY THE TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

GRADUATE DIVISION - UC RIVERSIDE

WELCOME: ASSOCIATE DEAN DAROLD HOLTEN, GRADUATE DIVISION

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR EVERLY FLEISCHER

"THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TA"

GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR CAROL TOMLINSON-KEASEY, CHAIR, PSYCHOLOGY

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL COMMENTS: LINDA NILSON, DIRECTOR - TADP

TADP MASTER TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

JADIS BLURTON — ALAN ODA
MERRI LYNN LACEY — ELSA VALDEZ

BETTE QUINN, MANAGEMENT SERVICES OFFICER
BJ CORRIVEAU, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

ANTHROPOLOGY
Margie Akin
Jim Stroud

BIOCHEMISTRY
Ernst Bergmann
George Kraft

BIOLOGY
Randall Mitchell
Catherine Thaler

BOTANY & PLANT SCIENCE
John Nason

BUSINESS ADMININISTRATION
Rodolfo Jeturian
Craig Weaver

CHEMISTRY
Michelle Gagnon
Martin Murphy

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Sherry Best
Victoria Brookhart
AnnMaria Rousey

ENGLISH
Linda Gill
Barbara Neault-Kelber

ENTOMOLOGY
Lisa Fry
David Headrick

ETHNIC STUDIES PROGRAM
Lorie Broomhall

GRADUATE ECONOMICS
Mark O. Tengesdal

HISTORY
John Ysursa

LITERATURES & LANGUAGES
Paula Harris
Montie Llaurado
Steven Merritt
Rami Salti
Susan Sanchez

MATH & COMPUTER SCIENCE
Carolyn Hamilton
Michael Nikithser
Shawnee Mcmurran

MUSIC
Jeffrey Morgan

PHYSICS
Barbara Rumando-Reyes
William Strossman

PSYCHOLOGY
Charles Lee Cox
Sherri Palmer

SOCIOLOGY
Catherine Petrissans

SOIL & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
Grant Cardon

STATISTICS
Edward Buhr
Aarti Jhaveri

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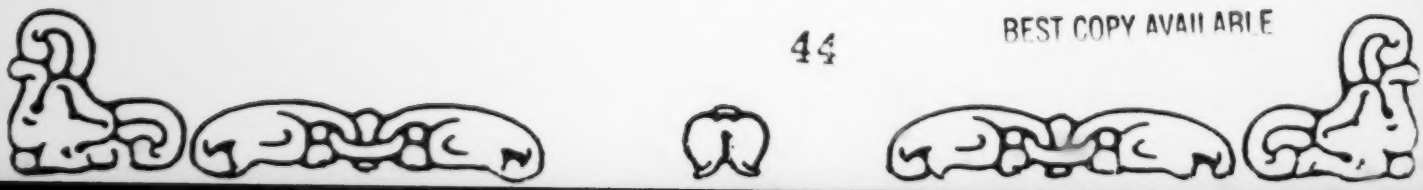
1989–90 OUTSTANDING

TEACHING ASSISTANT AWARDS

UNIVERSITY CLUB – BOYD LOUNGE
THURSDAY. MAY 10. 1990
NOON – 1:00 PM



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8 December 1989

To: Linda Nilson, Director, TA Development Program

From: Steve Axelrod, Director of Freshman Composition Steve Axelrod 4359

Re: Koji Ishii, Michael McGuinness, and Jian-Zhong Lin

Thank you for your willingness to help these T.A.'s maximize their teaching effectiveness. (You'll note I've added a third name to the two we discussed over the phone.) I've told them that you, as a professional in the field, will be able to give them some tips about teaching, and that they should get in contact with you early in January. If you would like to drop them a note at the English Department, that might be a nice way of breaking the ice.

My sense is that both Koji Ishii and Michael McGuinness are basically good teachers. Their grading is accurate and their commenting on papers is insightful and helpful. Both are very good students in our graduate program. I think they merely need to fine-tune their classroom performance. Both succeed with many students but leave a minority feeling confused. I think in both cases, their own self-doubt or self-consciousness may be the problem. Building their self-confidence may be part of the answer. Koji, incidentally, felt nervous at the prospect of being videotaped; his essential shyness may even get in the way of your efforts to help him to improve.

Jian-Zhong Lin strikes me as a more serious problem. Unlike the other two, who succeed with a majority of their students, Jian-Zhong loses most of his. His numerical ratings on student evaluations are the lowest in our program. He thinks the problem is that he's a hard grader and that his students aren't willing to do the work he requires of them. I think that that is part of the problem. But another part is that students are disaffected on other grounds as well. They, or many of them, don't think he's telling them valuable things about how to improve their writing; they often don't understand what he is trying to tell him. We've been aware of Jian-Zhong's problem for some time. Last year, I had one of our Distinguished Teachers on the ladder faculty, George Haggerty, sit in on one of his classes and mentor him. At the same time, I worked with him on his grading. We do not seem to have been successful. Jian-Zhong gets reasonably good evaluations when he is assigned to the Writing Lab as a tutor, but then the house caves in when he is assigned a class of his own. Incidentally, he does seem to me a competent grader of papers, and he has a ~~reasonably~~ good record in our graduate program. (He's writing his dissertation on Walt Whitman.) Although from China, he speaks English well; I don't think language per se is the problem, though cultural difference does have something to do with it.

All three of these teachers are good people, valuable members of our graduate program, and caring teachers. Any help you can give them to improve their teaching skills would be gratefully appreciated. Both Koji and Michael, incidentally, know that their teaching could be stronger than it presently is and look forward to your helping them with it.

If you would like to talk to me about them, let's make an appointment in January--or give me a call (ext. 4359 work; 780-5653 home). Thanks again.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—(Letterhead for interdepartmental use)

1/4 2-330

TEACHING EVALUATIONS
KOJI ISHII
ENGLISH 1C-08
FALL 1989

(THESE EVALUATIONS ARE TYPED EXACTLY AS STUDENTS WRITE THEM)

1. He followed his syllabus exactly which was very helpful. He didn't make himself clear on what he wanted in our in-class essays. There was a small communication problem because he had a difficult time understanding what we were trying to say.

2. The papers should have been graded and returned much earlier. The general syllabus structure was fine. The novel--Snow White--does not seen to only add confusion to the course. More stress on writing rather than reading should have been put on the course.

3. In class we read Snow White. Personally I think it was quite boring. It was hard to understand and also the book Textbook I see no use in it. However, as far the overall effectiveness of the class and teacher, I think it was alright. He's cool.

4. He often likes to give the class his own ideas and when a student offers a different idea, he puts it down. Even in our papers, if our ideas are not the same as his, then we are marked down on the paper even thought we support our own ideas.

5. Its hard to understand Koji at times. He goes off in his own little world. He has improved over the course of the quarter though. He needs to be better organized and better use students in class discussion.

6. I feel that Snow White was the wrong choice for the book to read. It is too confusing and awkward to comprehend. Even with the oral presentations and discussions, I didn't learn much from it.

7. Mr. Ishii has many great ideas. Unfortunately, he cannot present them clearly to his students. Perhaps, he is not able to convey his ideas because of his limitation of speaking clearly in English.

8. The TA need to break down his presentations during class. He left us in limbo most of the times and he wanted us to get his interpretation of the story.

9. I feel Mr. Ishii is a good teacher, he helped me very much on revising my papers due for class. I do feel that Mr. Ishii might want to review some of his presentations to make sure everyone understood what assignment is to be done. At times we were confused. I felt the book Snow White was really difficult and confusing to follow.

CONTINUED
TEACHING EVALUATIONS
KOJI ISHII
ENGLISH 1C-08

10. The TA needs to work on a couple of aspects of his teaching. First, I believe that Koji has very good ideas but he has difficulty expressing them. I do appreciate the lengthy critiques he does for every students papers.

11. He really does not speak English well enough to present ideas clearly. I'm sure he has many good ideas, but we aren't able to understand what he is saying. We are reading Snow White by Donald Bartheleme, and no one understands him well enough to know what specific ideas we should draw out of the story. He also has problems writing (spelling) in English.

12. The class itself would have been better if there were more hand-outs which portrayed interpretations of the stories we were writing about. I like the way we had to write a draft on the stories first, without anyone's input but our own.

13. I was very disappointed in this class. My TA was very vague in all aspects. We never knew what he was trying to say and whenever we asked him questions about what he was saying he confused us more. As far as the syllabus goes it was great. It was the only thing I understood. However, I thought Snow White was very confusing. Time periods to write essays were more than generous. As far as grading papers, I liked the way my TA commented. He gave me some helpful hints. I didn't understand him in class--that's all.

14. Koji has to work on expressing himself a little better. His thoughts and ideas are good except he needs to clarify it so we can comprehend it clearly. He tries his best to get us to respond or discuss the topics mentioned in lecture. Most of the time its the students lack of enthusiasm. I had no real trouble understanding him but I could see that some students had difficulty.

TEACHING EVALUATIONS
Koji Ishii
English 1B (46)
Winter, 1990
(THESE COMMENTS ARE TYPED EXACTLY AS THE STUDENTS WRITE THEM.)

1) Koji is a good teacher, but tends to get too specific on simple material. Material that is easily understood, he tries to make it simpler when it can't be done and wasts alot of time doing so. Grading on the essays is fine, but grades on rough drafts are questionable because they're always the same.

2) I think Koji is a good instructor. I like how he outlines the lessons for the day on the board. However, although he does have frequent class participation, he often "cuts students off" w/out allowing them to finish their thought. Sometimes he wonders why class participation is so low and I think it is because no one wants to speak for fear of being cut off.

3) Does not fully write concept involves in discussion on the board for possible notetaking.

4) I feel that more could have been accomplished if the students had been further motivated. Also more assignments could have been accomplished if the class presentation were better reconstructed.

5) I feel Koji wa a very good T.A. even though there was some problems understanding him at first. He went through each section and carefully analized it for us. He also had very good interpretations of the reading material assigned to us. Overall he was a very good T.A. that was concerned that everyone succeed in his class.

6) He was a pretty funny guy too.

7) He understands the materials very well but he has trouble in explaining them. Sometimes, he is quite confusing about what he is talking about.

8) He does an excellent job.

9) He is difficult to understand. He does not give exact goals to aim for, and his grading is unfair because if a student does <u>everything</u> he asks for the paper is still not an "A" to him or in the gradebook.

10) Mr. Ishii is a very organized and prepared teacher but sometimes he tends to rush through the lesson when we are running out of time. The best thing about his teaching is that he writes one page of comments on our essays when he returns them. This helps us to improve on our weaknesses.

IN-CLASS OBSERVATION
BY TADP DIRECTOR

1136 Hum
Section 46
English 1B

1/8/90
FIRST
SECTION

Koji –

Put your office hours on the board, too. At least announce them. (They get lost on the syllabus.) Why not start off ~~today~~ with "Good morning"?

Wonderful that you introduced yourself as a genuine person and included a little information about your background. You added humor and warmth to the class atmosphere. You warned class about your accent, and that helps to win the students over.

You might have circulated the syllabi while you were taking attendance -- just to save time.

Very good that you don't say "um" between words and phrases.

Before launching into your syllabus, you might give your overall goals for the students in this course, for instance: "to learn how to make a persuasive or argument. So if you plan to become a lawyer or a manager, this course will help you handle your career more

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effectively." Make the goals relevant to the students' lives.

Very good that you check with the students to see that they understand so far.

Well organized presentation of the syllabus. Your work demands seem very reasonable. So do your grading standards.

You convey a sense of professionalism about the work you are assigning and the expectations you have of the students.

I asked the question about grading papers because I thought you'd want to know if I were a student. (I'm surprised no one else asked!) Your answer was fine.

Excellent that you talked about the utility of argumentative skills in college. You might make your point even earlier (before the syllabus).

Consider moving about the room a bit more. People's eyes follow moving

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objects. Movement can help you keep students' attention.

You loosened up nicely after going over the syllabus.

"To argue" — It would be a good idea to tease out the students' perceptions of the meaning of "to argue." You should get the students more actively involved in the class early, the first day. Then they'll more easily participate later on.

Good use of the board. (Try not to talk directly to it; you rarely do now, but it's something to watch.)

"Do you see the point?" Get students to tell you what they think the point is. Get them to tell you if they're learning.

When you loosen up and actually teach your English improves!

When you asked for the definition of persuasion, and nothing happened —

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wait. Make those students respond Twice (a little time, 5-10 seconds) puts pressure on them to think and to volunteer their opinions.

Getting the students to participate will improve your rapport with the class. It will make the classroom a two-way street.

Don't give them the answer! (Also Buddhism and Christianity) Try again. Or I should say, list a second person and a third and a fourth offer other possible answers.

There was nothing wrong with your example just because the first person who volunteered an answer didn't say what you wanted.

You made me want to participate in the discussion, and I couldn't! (That is I really wasn't a student, so I had to stay out of it.)

Wonderful - you got the class active the last five minutes!

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___ Your writing on the board is very clear, very easy to read.

Your eye contact is excellent.

Tease that economic interpretation out of them. You later sort of did, but you could have done better. Wait for them to respond. Give hints. Wait a bit longer. Teaching takes time, a lot more time than just talking.

Why wasn't the assignments you gave at the end on the syllabus? I found that all confusing.

I had a free-floating feeling that at times you were too abstract for these lower division students. You spoke about "to argue" definitions and the concepts of logic and rhetoric too generally, too much in the abstract. Learn to give a lot more examples -- very day examples, preferably from everyday life (e.g. college life), family relations and the mass media. The only examples I recall were the religious ones (Christianity and Buddhism) and

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the one about white men deserving the power to control the U.S./America. Teaching requires lots and lots of illustration drawing from students' limited experience. A great example worthy of debate/argument — and one very relevant to undergrads — would be the proposed restriction against drug use to qualify for student loans. Giving several common examples of every definition or concept you introduce would help students to make more sense out of your lessons.

Be careful how you respond to students' contributions. Always emphasize what is right about what they say, not about the incompleteness of a remark. Students could interpret your half-ok/half-not-ok reactions as a put down. They participate less as a result. You have to make the students feel intelligent for them to become that way.

As for as your English goes, try to "smooth" it out. It's staccato. One word doesn't blend into the one before or the one after. Your pace is good, however. The problem is simply the space between words.

I hope you find these comments helpful

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Please feel free to drop by the TADP office (1110 Library South) or call me (x 3386) for clarification, explanation, elaboration, etc. I'll pass these comments on to Merri Lynn Hacey to provide her with a baseline for her in-section observation of your teaching later on in the quarter. Then you can schedule a video-taping of your section.

Thank you for letting me visit your class.

Linda Nilson
Dir., TADP.

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Linda FYI

In-class observation by TADP Master TA, MERRI LYNN LACEY

2-6-90

Dear Koji,

I apologize for taking this long to get back to you about my observation of your class. Somehow it seems mucher longer than one week. I guess my life is too busy.

I am very pleased with the job you are doing. Your interaction with the students before class was nice. It appears that you have a good relationship with your students. I did not see anyone sitting in the very back of the room and that is a good sign. During your lecture you maintained good eye contact and checked on the students' comprehension. The writing assignments that you returned appeared to contain many comments for the students' benefit. Your praise of the students for the improvements in their rewrites was very positive and can only help to motivate the students. Their improvement is a good reflection on your teaching.

I noticed two areas in which you appear to have improved since Dr. Nilson's observation the first week. You moved about the class and incorporated "common" examples into your presentation. Your movements did not distract me, and in fact I feel they enhanced your lecture. Your use of the Commons Food Service was excellent and appropriate. It provided not only a concrete example for the students but also allowed a little humor in the class.

The one problem which I would direct your efforts towards is your use of questions in class. Sometimes I was unclear as to whether a question was intended to be rhetorical or not. I think your students are willing to answer your questions, but sometimes you do not give them enough time to respond. As a general rule, allow **10 - 30** seconds to pass before you restate the question or give the students a hint. Literally count to yourself in order to give the students enough time to think and get their courage up. Remember, **you can always wait one second longer than your students**! The silence will actually stimulate class participation. Also avoid layering one question on top of another. Let them think of one thing at a time.

I hope these comments are helpful. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me. I am enclosing a videotape sign-up form. You need to complete it and return it to the TADP office as soon as possible. Try and schedule a time during which you will be lecturing. The videotape will give you the opportunity to evaluate yourself. Keep up the good work, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Merri Lynn

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TEACHING EVALUATIONS
Vivian Woodyard
English 1A (04)
Winter, 1990
(THESE COMMENTS ARE TYPED EXACTLY AS THE STUDENTS WRITE THEM.)

1) For the past 6 years I have been in honors English classes. Upon entering this class I reminded myself that it may move more slowly but I certainly never expected to have to suffer through one of my best subjects. Vivian Woodyard is a poor instructor. Firstly, she is completely unorganized, at least 75% of our syllabus was postponed because she was too lazy to get things copied or too lazy to grade our papers. She understands the material well but doesn't present it in a manner that is interesting nor understanding. She cares nothing about what her students have to say during discussions. Her grading policy is absolutely ridiculous. An A paper to her is one that is good enough to be published. Does she realize that this is merely 1A. We just now passed the Subject A. Her class is not consistent - there is no basic format to follow. Her in class essays are a waste. To give a student 20 minutes for an entire essay in mind-boggling to me. One of the times we had to write a diagnostic essay - the question was not even complete. It was like trying to write an essay on 1/2 of a subject A question. Mrs. Woodyard most definitely needs further training if she ever plans to be a professor.

2) First of all, she does not express herself clearly or precisely, In fact, she does not express herself at all about anything related to English 1A. She rambles about her teaching career in South Africa and her son who is an editor at UCLA. Do we need to know her whole life story? She is completely irresponsible. For example she still has three or four of our essays that she still hasn't corrected or returned to us. She has set back all of our class projects weeks behind. She even had to make a new syllabus because she couldn't keep up with her original plans. I went in for help several times because I didn't gain anything class time. She didn't tell me anything I was doing wrong (except during a few grammatical problems) Then she said I was a great writer. So, I turned my essay in, and I get a B- with to my surprise many many things I could've improved which she hadn't told me of previously. How am I supposed to learn? She has no clue what either of the novels we had to read were about. She asked US what we thought and said, "If it fits, its right." Is that any way to teach? She didn't explain any relationships, symbols or any literary terms, etc. I have not learned one thing in English 1A, and that is completely unfair because now I'll have a terrible time in English 1B. If this woman receives her Ph.D, so help me God! There will be a dramatic increase in illiteracy at UCR.

3) Mrs. Woodyard was usually available for any help needed and the conferences helped a great deal. The conference really helped me understand what I was doing wrong and needed to do to get a better grade.

4) The class could have been better taught. We didn't go over the books we real that much. More interesting literature books could have been chosen for the class.

(THESE COMMENTS ARE TYPED EXACTLY AS THE STUDENTS WRITE THEM.)

5) I am very disappointed with English this quarter. I feel I have been robbed of a good English class as well as teacher. Mrs. Woodyard was by far the worst teacher I have ever encountered. I am not saying this because I am failing the class (I'm getting a B+), but because this is how I really feel. She is an extremely lazy woman. I can only remember about two class sessions where she actually tried to teach the class. Most of the time she puts a movie on for us to watch (of course somewhat pertinent) but it does not really help. Today, the ninth week of class, we are taking a library tour. Many times she spends an hour talking about commas. I can understand spending about fifteen minutes on this topic, but not an hour. In the beginning of the quarter she was absent about two or three times because her mother died. I don't think she should have come back to teach because obviously this was an emotional strain for her. Of course now everything is late getting back to us, she blames on that incident. I also feel that many times when she attempts to talk about a book that we read, a total of four class times spent for discussion, she has no control over the situation. Many times I felt as if she did not even know what she was talking about. Whenever she gets a chance, she tries to tell the class about her time spent in Africa. She does this whether or not what we are talking about in class relates to her stories. I may sound as if I am very bitter, and in some way I am. I wasted a quarter of my time, as well as my money, taking this English class. I did not learn anything and I honestly tried to. It would be a big mistake for this University to hire this teacher for another quarter.

6) She is a good T.A. who is very conserned about the students. She does understand the material. Her class is boring though. It may just be the time of day.

7) Vivian is a good teacher but sometime she seems a little unorganized. She cares for her students welfare but she plans long assignments that stretch out for weeks. Overall she is a nice lady and a pretty good talking Assistant.

8) I felt that Mrs. Woodyard did an excellent job considering the amount of stress she must have had due to her mother's death during the course. She kept the class going and was either here or always had someone else in place of her to teach the class.

9) She is too opinionated & doesn't yield to anyone elses ideas

10) Doesn't keep on top of things. Is late with returning papers back. Grades essays on her opinion of style, not the writers, even if the sentence structure is okay.

(THESE COMMENTS ARE TYPED EXACTLY AS THE STUDENTS WRITE THEM.)

11) I feel that Mrs. Woodyard does not put enough effort into her teaching. She has not kept up to day with returning our assignments, and constantly gives excuses for her actions. She also tells us that she compares all of our papers to everything we have done, which basically means she is not looking at our papers individually on creativity and content, but based on what she has received in the past. I also do not feel "pop" quizes on St. Martin's Guide is necessary. She picks out the littest detail and presumes that we have memorized it. I would like to make clear that I do not agree with her teaching methods, and that I do have an acceptable grade in her class, but she does not use any originality when presenting information in her lectures. When we discuss books in class, she expects us to do <u>all</u> of the work, she doesn't express any concepts or ideas that are vital to the discussion. I would like her to improve on her teaching methods so that her students next quarter will learn something besides St. Martin's Guide. I few times students have asked her a question and she either diverts into another topic or explains that "no one really knows an answer to that. Overall, I would like her to pay more attention to teaching and expressing ideas in class which pertain to the material rather than restating, over and over, what was already said in the book (St. Martin's Guide). Also, when she gives us essays in class, she excepts a completely thought at essay 1-1/2 pages in 30 minutes w/quotes cited from the book.

12) For the most part, I did not like the class, because the teacher was rather disorganized. Her grading was inconsistent & I felt it unfair to receive a low grade on a paper when the teacher was unable to explain to me why I got such a grade.

13) Reporting Information essay was due on the same day as the class' first library trip. The library trip could have saved me valuable time if done before this particular essay.

14) An am class is hard we know, trying to keep our interest in the morning should be what you have to work on.

RIVERSIDE. THE GRADUATE DIVISION
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
1110 LIBRARY SOUTH
EXTENSION 3386

May 1, 1990

TO: Vivian Woodyard
English Department

FROM: Linda B. Nilson, Director LBN
Alan Oda, Master Teaching Assistant AO

RE: Review of Our April 30 Videotape Evaluation Session

For your reference, we'd like to summarize some of the major points we made during our meeting last Monday afternoon.

We were very favorably impressed by your obvious command of the literature that you were covering, and we sense that your mastery commanded your students' respect. They participated actively in the discussion that you led and were not hesitant to either ask questions or to answer your questions.

We suggested that you enhance your teaching style by giving greater structure and direction to your discussions, and we proposed a number of means for achieving this objective:

1) Asking students to write their questions on 3"x5" cards at the beginning of class and focusing part of the discussion on these.

2) Developing objectives and/or an outline for each class and writing these on the board at the beginning of class.

3) Developing a handout with a framework for literary analysis (to be used for each piece of literature assigned).

4) Putting major discussion questions that you have developed on the board at the beginning of class.

5) Starting your discussions with a factual review of the literature assigned, then working up to higher level questions addressing students' comprehension, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

In brief, we believe that your students would benefit from some kind of "road map" that would give shape and direction to the discussions.

In addition, we recommended that you pause a little longer after posing a question and that you close class by asking the students for feedback on what they learned that day.

If you change your mind about having a second videotaping or letting us conduct a 10-15 minute class interview, please let us know. We are available at your convenience.

cc: Steven Axelrod
Professor of English and Director of Composition

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA — (Letterhead for interdepartmental use)

RIVERSIDE: THE GRADUATE DIVISION
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
1110 LIBRARY SOUTH
EXTENSION 3386

May 1, 1990

TO: Steven Axelrod
Professor of English and Director of Composition

FROM: Linda B. Nilson, Director LBN

RE: Progress with Vivian Woodyard

This memo may be a moot point as Vivian told Master TA Alan Oda and me that she will be on a fellowship next year and will not continue her TAship.

Alan and I reacted to this news with a sigh of relief. Viewing her videotape, we were able to diagnose at least one critical classroom problem that her students last quarter repeatedly mentioned: the lack of focus and organization of her discussions. No doubt, this problem made many of her students feel that her classes were worthless. Our memo to her lists some of the remedies we suggested.

Unfortunately, Alan and I met with resistance every step of the way. Vivian did not seem to perceive the need for greater structure, even for the sake of her "slower" students. The only idea that evoked a positive response was the use of 3"x5" cards to solicit student questions--a strategy that, if used alone, will not add sufficient organization to her classes.

Vivian's reason for not wanting to introduce a framework for literary analysis was that it would reduce her classes to high school level.

Left out of Alan's and my memo to her was our recommendation that she move out from behind the desk and the podium more. She claimed that she prefers to stand behind them due to her weight. So we dropped the issue.

As the last paragraph implies, we also suggested that she be videotaped a second time this quarter (she said that she had been videotaped quite a few times in the past and never found the experience stressful) and/or that she allow Alan and me to conduct a 10-15 minute group interview with her class. She refused us permission to do either. Her tone was friendly but her excuses--basically, a lack of time to spare for such activities--were suspect. Of course, we can go no further without her permission.

Obviously, Vivian is resisting even the gentlest efforts to help her improve her classroom style. In psychological terms, she's in denial. If you'd like us to pursue the case another step, we would contact the Counseling Center and follow a counselor's advice. Please let me know is you'd like us to do so. Thank you.

cc: Darold Holten, Associate Dean
Graduate Division

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA — Letterhead for interdepartmental use

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Ever wonder who teaches TAs?

by Shannon A. Butler
features editor

It isn't easy being a Teaching Assistant (TA).

Most TAs are accepted to graduate school on the basis of scholarship and GRE scores. However, once they accept a TAship they are expected to deliver great lectures and lead dynamic discussion sections, which can be very difficult, especially if a TA has never had formal teaching training. UC Riverside recognizes this dilemma.

Grant aimed at TA training

In September of 1988, a grant from the Department of Education's Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) facilitated the introduction of the Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP).

Under the direction of Dr. Linda Nilson, TADP holds a pre-academic year orientation, provides a five week seminar by experienced TAs, facilitates videotaped evaluations, and organizes workshops and quarterly colloquia.

In addition, the *Teaching Excellence Manual* is provided to all TAs.

It includes current research on teaching methods, student development, grading, and campus policies.

"This year's program is strictly to help TAs. Last year, it was considered experimental research. Half of the grad students got training, while the other half did not," said Nilson.

TAs as disciples

Currently, UC Riverside is the most quickly expanding of all the UC campuses. 61 percent of all student/instructor contact hours are made with TAs, who thus have a great deal of influence.

"Some students think that professors are gods, and that TAs must therefore be disciples. You are very powerful in the eyes of students. You can be very important to them," said Roger Hayes, senior staff member at the Learning Center.

"But, as TAs you must also recognize that your view of the world may not be shared with the students," said Hayes.

The TA training offered by TADP is new, but various forms of TA orientation and development have existed in different departments for years.

Shannon Butler/*Highlander*

Roger Hayes, senior learning center staff member, and Elsa Valdez, master TA, present "the come-on", one of five skits dramatizing TA nightmares.

"Realistically, it's the supervising professors' responsibility to explain what to do when students in the class are being disruptive, or cheating, or having problems.

There are some departments who have had established TA training programs for years, but there are others that just do not have the resources. "We can help in that capacity," said Alan Oda, Master Teaching Assistant, and Psychology graduate student.

"One thing to keep in mind is with the University growing from 7500 to 8200, TAs are going to be relied on more and more," said Oda.

"A lecture is a lot easier to deliver than a discussion is to run. And, when run well, lab and discussion sections are better teaching tools than lectures for creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, and generating intrinsic interest in material," said Nilson.

"Also, what is learned in discussion and lab is retained longer by students."

TADP helps graduate students to work on their teaching skills.

"There is a lot more to teaching than just telling information to a class. We teach creative presentation techniques," said Nilson.

Hayes adds, "We try to train TAs for situations that might occur. While the likelihood of a student armed with an automatic weapon storming into a discussion section angered over a bad grade is slim, it could happen and we try to prepare our TAs for that [illegible]"

OUTSTANDING TA AWARD RECIPIENTS

Anthropology:
Margie Akin and Jim Stroud
Biochemistry:
Ernst Bergmann and George Kraft
Biology:
Randall Mitchell and
Catherine Thaler
Botany and Plant Sciences:
John Nason
Business Administration:
Rodolfo Jeturian and Craig Weaver
Chemistry:
Michelle Gagnon and
Martin Murphy
School of Education:
Sherry Best, Victoria Brookhart, and AnnMaria Rousey
English:
Linda Gil and Barbara Neault-Keber
Entomology:
Lisa Fry and David Headrick
Ethnic Studies Program:
Lorie Broomhall
Graduate Economics:
Mark O. Tengesdal
History:
John Ysursa
Literature and Languages:
Paula Harris, Monde Lisurado, Steven Merritt, Ramzi Salti, and
Susan Sanchez
Math and Computer Science:
Carolyn Hamilton,
Michael Nilsthear,
and Shawnee Mcmurran
Music:
Jeffrey Morgan
Physics:
Barbara Rimando-Reyes and William Strossman
Psychology:
Charles Lee Cox and Sherri Palmer
Sociology:
Catherine Petrissans
Soil and Environmental Science:
Grant Cardon
Statistics:
Edward Buhr and Aarti Jharveri

Outstanding TAs honored at luncheon

by CHRISTY LOPEZ
STAFF WRITER

Comments such as, "I honestly didn't mind getting up for my 8 AM discussion" or, "She not only taught me Chemistry, she taught me to love Chemistry," appeared on some teaching assistant (TA) evaluation forms this year.

In appreciation of TAs who can elicit such praise from their students, the Teaching Assistant Development Program, under the direction of Dr. Linda Nilson, held its second Outstanding TA Awards Luncheon last week. Thirty-eight TAs were honored for their excellence. Selection for the awards was based primarily on the TA evaluation forms.

"It was really the voice of the students speaking," said Nilson.

Other criteria included seniority (although several first year TAs were honored) and the size of the sections taught, since larger sections are more difficult to handle.

The 38 honorees came from 20 different departments.

"It was unexpected. It is really nice that it [the award] was based on what the students said," Michelle Gagnon of the Chemistry Department said.

John Ysursa, the only TA chosen from the History Department, said he didn't know why he was singled out, but he joked that he "wasn't bitter about it."

Other TAs had more definite ideas about why they were recognized.

When asked what he thought made him such an effective TA, Jim Stroud, an Anthropology graduate student, cited five years of experience as a high school teacher.

"I think I know how to motivate them [the students], and I'm used to being up in front of a class," Stroud said.

The TADP Director was instrumental in obtaining this coverage on one of her Master Teaching Assistants, Jadis (Elizabeth) Blurton. The article was never intended to focus on the TADP or FIPSE.

TA juggles family life, studies

by Christy Lopez
staff writer

"I have this shining moment blazoned in my memory...I had to correct all of the twenty page finals for one of my Statistics classes I was TAing, I had these stacks of paper piled all over the place...my daughter was doing a science project on batteries and bulbs-electricity and stuff, so she had batteries, bulbs, wires, paper, glue, and everything else all over the house. My son was doing a thing on lungs and I had a rat and a mouse that we were dissecting and I was pregnant. And I remember at one time walking in from the garage to this living room that looked like a pile of statistics papers and bulbs and construction paper with blood all over my hands and pregnant out to here and I'm thinking-'This is my life.'"

Elizabeth, or 'Jadis', Burton as she prefers to be called, has grown used to the hectic lifestyle described above, because she's had to. Currently working toward her PhD in Developmental Psychology at UCR, she has her bachelor's degree in Psychology from American University, holds a master's degree in Special Education for the gifted, and a Montessori certificate.

As a graduate student at UCR, she is involved in the Master Teaching Assistant program (designed to help TAs improve their teaching skills), and is the associate editor of *The Tadpole*, the newsletter aimed at UCR teaching assistants. Meanwhile, she manages to maintain a high grade point average.

While these accomplishments are impressive in themselves, the fact that Burton who is the mother of six makes them even more so.

Her eldest daughter, Susan, was adopted, after literally being given to her as a wedding present in Ecuador where Burton was married. Her eldest son, Jeremy, is headed for college when he graduates next year, while her 13 year old son, Christopher, will be studying music at Interlocken.

She has not one, but two daughters named Jessica, one of whom despite a severe genetic condition, has won every science fair for the last five years and does excellent in school. Burton has a toddler as well, two and a half year old Daniel.

Jadis Burton Christian Caldwell/Highlander

How does Burton raise such an amazing family and at the same time remain such a committed and excellent TA and graduate student?

According to Burton, the key is maintaining a balance between work and home.

"I'm not being a TA when I'm home and I'm not being a mom when I'm here. Sometimes it's difficult, sometimes you really don't have a choice. When this is the case, you just have to accept a little pandemonium in your life", Burton says with a smile.

Burton speaks enthusiastically of her family, pulling out her collection wallet- sized of family portraits. She proudly relates that Danny "is the only two year old I met who likes opera...including rock opera. His favorite song is 'Jesus Christ, Superstar'," Burton said.

Having kids can "come in handy," she points out. For instance, her son Christopher and his friend did the artwork for the first issue of *The Tadpole*.

Burton finds her academic work is interesting and important.

"I feel like I'm kind of like a lobbyist and I explain a lot of things that a lot of people don't understand. Even if they don't go into psychology, they'll know what a percentile is...maybe they'll explain it to their neighbor, and there is a little ripple to the people who don't know what those things mean. We all have to deal with developmental psychology if we're going to have kids," Burton said.

Despite the value Burton places on her work, she realizes that with a family, compromises must be made.

"You can't do everything. You have a short period where you really can't put everything into your work, and you accept that.

It's not that you can't do as well, it's just that for a little while [you] have to pull back a little bit then zoom ahead later...you have to decide when you want your [work to be just] sufficient and choose that time to have your children," Burton said.

WHO IS TEACHING YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

By Kathy Barton

This is an important question, to be sure, and one being asked more often by parents and educational leaders nationwide as concern heightens over the quality of undergraduate education.

UCR, like all comprehensive research universities across the country, divides undergraduate teaching among faculty members, lecturers, and graduate students assigned as Teaching Assistants (TAs). In recent years, particular concern has been raised within the University of California over the qualifications of Teaching Assistants, and in the past two years UCR has responded by training TAs for their assignments and providing them with continuing support.

From its founding in 1954 as a small liberal arts college, UCR has placed special emphasis on teaching. In fact, shortly after its establishment, the campus was listed in a survey of colleges and universities as one of the 10 best undergraduate colleges in the nation.

Even after UCR became a comprehensive research university offering graduate level education and began to grow dramatically, it has continued to be cited among the nation's most respected universities. Recently UCR was listed along with Harvard and the University of Chicago as universities which rank high in both the sciences and humanities in the number of undergraduates who go on to earn a doctorate.

Although there has been a one-day orientation for new TAs at UCR for more than 10 years, formal training was added in 1988 and made mandatory. The Teaching Assistant Development Program provides all first-year TAs with an orientation and training in effective teaching techniques. The number one priority of the program, according to Director Linda B. Nilson, is enhancing UCR's excellence in undergraduate education. New TAs must now complete a five-week training seminar that includes such topics as establishing the right mood in class, maintaining classroom decorum, eliciting student participation in discussions, organizing a lecture, and sparking students' curiosity. The seminar includes a videotape analysis of each TA. Seminar sessions are conducted by "Master TAs," graduate students who have a record of excellence in their own teaching.

In addition, TAs whose native language is not English are required to pass an oral exam before conducting in-class teaching assignments.

About 200 new TAs completed the seminar this year. They have joined the ranks of graduate students who, under the direction of the faculty member conducting the course, lead lab and small-group discussion sections.

Next year, the TA seminar will be offered in three "disciplinary clusters"–lab science, discussion sections, and foreign language instruction–to provide more specialized training for TAs in those disciplines, Nilson said. "This approach is a genuine innovation in TA training nationwide."

For Craig Weaver, an M.B.A. candidate and first-year TA, the program provided a sense of security and helped lessen the anxiety that new TAs naturally experience. Weaver, who last fall led two discussion sections of an accounting course, found particular value in the video tape analysis.

"I was intrigued by it. You step outside yourself and take a look back," he said. "I think it allows you to take the perspective of the students." Weaver said he has worked to eliminate "annoying mannerisms" he noticed in his first videotape session and plans to repeat the analysis to further hone his teaching skills.

TAs who complete the seminar have a significant advantage over their counterparts of a few years ago who began teaching undergraduates with little preparation, said Master TA Elsa Valdez, who is working toward a Ph.D. in Sociology. "I went into class on my first day with no idea what to expect. I was kind of thrown into the classroom, and I learned by trial and error. That first quarter was very hard," Valdez said.

Another advantage of the program is the training and teaching experience gained by TAs, many of who plan careers as college professors. For them, the Teaching Assistant Development Program and subsequent classroom experience embody the spirit of the old Japanese proverb, "To teach is to learn."

UCR PARENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER, SPRING 1990, p. 3. Published by the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, 3127 Administration Building

UC Riverside

Magazine / August 1990

Student Profiles

This edition of the magazine is devoted entirely to UCR students. Students were selected for the following profiles based on nominations from across the campus. Interviews were conducted during Winter and Spring Quarters, 1990. The profiles form a mosaic depicting the life and vitality of UCR students and the diversity of viewpoints, talents, interests, and backgrounds that students represent.

3 **Standouts:** UCR stands out by offering exceptional opportunities to the state's best and brightest students.

Bill Crone · Larisa Acevedo · Khoi Nguyen
Suzanne Elizarraras · Sarah Evans · Jennifer Robbins

10 **Degrees of Difference:** Reentry students share a strong appreciation for the difference their degrees will make in achieving their goals.

Maryann Traufler · Shaune Edwards · Joe Trainer
Gary Courtier · Pauline Stedt · Madrienne Buskirk

17 **Sound Mind, Sound Body:** UCR students make time for sports activities and fitness, despite their demanding academic schedules.

Regina Carbajal · Adriana Sandoval · Fred Furry
Mike Tan · Mark J. Pickering · James Huff

24 **Creativity in Action:** Creative endeavors, a hallmark of the UCR experience, introduce students at all levels to the joy of discovery.

Butch Kovan · Scott Perich · Maria De Maci
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Robert Podolsky · David Seibert · Marla Kozlak
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Departments

48 **UCR People: Faculty and staff publications and presentations, appointments and elections, and awards and honors.**

52 **Student Favorites:** Students' suggestions for reading enjoyment.

ELIZABETH "JADIS" BLURTON

Elizabeth "Jadis" Blurton deftly maintains a balance between work and home. "Sometimes it's difficult; sometimes you really don't have a choice. When this is the case, you just have to accept a little pandemonium in your life," says Blurton.

Elizabeth "Jadis" Blurton is an inspiration to anyone who has ever considered the complications of pursuing an advanced degree while raising a family. As a wife and the mother of six children, she shows that a family and successful career can be compatible.

Blurton is more commonly known as "Jadis," a nickname she chose from a character in the children's book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. After moving when she was seven, she simply chose the moniker and told her new friends it was her name. This example of self-determination reflects the character she has expressed since then through her impressive accomplishments.

Blurton, 35, received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from American University in 1974. She holds a Master's degree in Special Education for the gifted and a Montessori certificate. She is currently working toward a Ph.D in Developmental Psychology at UCR.

Blurton is studying cognitive development and short term memory. She is motivated by the conviction that developmental psychology is an extremely relevant and important field. "We all have to deal with developmental psychology if we're going to have kids," she says.

Blurton is also a Master Teaching Assistant in the new Teaching Assistant Development Program at UCR. The program is designed, as she puts it, "to teach T.A.'s to T.A." Blurton, who has a record of excellence as a T.A., conducts seminars to train new T.A.'s in effective teaching techniques. She plans to teach at the university level when she graduates.

Blurton also is Associate Editor of *The Tadpole*, a newsletter that addresses the questions and concerns of T.A.'s at UCR. She is as committed to the newsletter as she is to the other aspects of her work and calls it "her baby."

The newsletter isn't Blurton's only baby. Her amazing family includes a 2 1/2-year-old son, Daniel, as well as five other children. Her oldest daughter, Susan, was adopted after literally being given to her as a wedding present in Ecuador where Blurton was married. Susan, 25, is now married with a child of her own.

Blurton's oldest son Jeremy, 17, is headed for college next year, while 15-year-old Christopher, who along with a friend has done the artwork for *The Tadpole*, will be studying music at Interlocken. She also has two daughters, ages 11 and 12. Blurton's husband is an Associate Professor at California State University, San Bernardino.

By Christy Lopez

Users Organization for the superconducting Super Collider (USSC). High energy physicists created the USSC as an interface with the planned Superconducting Super Collider.

J. Brian Mudd, formerly Vice President of The Plant Cell Research Institute Inc. in Dublin, California, has been appointed Director of the Statewide Air Pollution Research Center at UCR. Mudd served as a faculty member at UCR from 1961 to 1981.

Linda B. Nilson has been appointed Director of the Teaching Assistant Development Program at UCR. The program provides all first-year Teaching Assistants with a comprehensive orientation for their new positions and training in effective teaching techniques and procedures.

June E. O'Connor, Chair and Associate Professor of Religious Studies, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Society of Christian Ethics for a four-year term, 1990-94.

Mary Price, Associate Professor of Biology, has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal *Ecology* as a subject matter editor.

Linda B. Nilson

Ramon J. Rhine, Professor of Psychology and former Chair of the Academic Senate, Riverside Division, has been elected to life membership as a Fellow at Clare Hall College at Cambridge University in England.

Siegfried Schaible, Professor in the Graduate School of Management, has been invited to join the editorial board of *Rivista di Matematica per le Scienze Economiche e Sociali* (Italy) and was reappointed as Associate Editor of *Information Systems and Operations Research* (Canada).

Aman Ullah, Professor in the Graduate School of Management, is Co-editor of *Econometric Reviews* and Founding Associate Editor of the *Journal of Nonparametric Statistics*. Since 1987, he has been a Fellow of the India National Academy of Sciences.

Seymour D. Van Gundy, Dean of the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Director of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UCR, and Professor of Nematology and Plant Pathology, served as chairman of a National Academy of Sciences delegation to Czechoslovakia. The two-week visit last April was one of a continuing series of science policy workshops made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

Keith Widaman, Associate Professor of Psychology, has been elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology. The professional society represents the leading methodologists in psychology and is limited to 65 invited members.

Carl Winter, Extension Toxicologist, has been appointed to a committee of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges to help prepare a document on food safety for Congress.

R. Fred Zuker, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, has been appointed an educational representative to the Riverside County Private Industry Council. The Private Industry Council in partnership with Riverside County assists individuals in need to attain economic self-sufficiency through the Job Training Partnership Act.

Aman Ullah

Awards and Honors

Jan Blacher, Associate Professor of Education, has been awarded the 1989 Research Award from the American Association on Mental Retardation (Region II). She was honored for contributing significant new knowledge in the field of developmental disabilities and for helping to increase public understanding and awareness about persons with mental retardation and their families.

Carlos Cortes, Professor of History, received the National Multicultural Trainer of the Year Award for 1989 from the American Society for Training and Development.

William O. Dawson, Professor of Plant Pathology, has received the American Phytopathological Society Fellow Award in recognition of his innovative contributions to the field of plant virology.

Joseph W. Eckert, Professor of Plant Pathology, received a national award from the National Agri-Marketing Association for his pioneering research on postharvest deterioration of

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RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521

January 22, 1990

LINDA NILSON, DIRECTOR
BJ CORRIVEAU, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Dear Linda and BJ:

The first edition of "The Tadpole" brought a special pleasure to me. I remembered so clearly my years as a T.A. How far we have come!

The Teaching Assistant Development Program is a pride of the campus, and I am confident that the academic lives of countless undergraduate and graduate students are positively impacted.

I am grateful for your efforts and commitment.

Sincerely,

Rosemary

Rosemary S.J. Schraer
Chancellor

mv

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—(Letterhead for interdepartmental use)

The Tadpole

A Newsletter for Teaching Assistants
At the University of California, Riverside
presented by the
Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP)

Volume 1 Winter, 1990 Number 1

Dear Teaching Assistants,

This is <u>your</u> newsletter, whether you just walked into your first section or just walked out of your seventy-third. We're not publishing it for profit. Its sole purpose is to serve you in all your roles: college instructor, student counselor, student-professor mediator (that's a tough one), role model, intellectual, researcher, graduate student, employee, colleague, idealist (we all are, let's face it) and person possessed by a quest for truth.

We in the TADP plan to write and reprint news and feature articles that address your multi-role needs and interests. And as we've done in this first issue of *The Tadpole*, we'll develop each successive issue around one key critical topic. With this format, we can treat a subject in greater depth and diversity, as does our UCLA counterpart, *The TA at UCLA*. But to make this your newsletter, we need, by definition, <u>your news</u> and <u>your letters</u>. All that's fit to print from <u>you</u>. Faculty, staff and administrators: we want to hear from you as well. This publication is as open a forum as you'll ever find. (No referees to haggle with.) All we ask is that whatever you send us is of interest to our T.A.s. When you consider all their roles, that's a pretty broad spectrum!

Linda Nilson

Linda Nilson
Director, TADP

A Note from the Editors:

*by Jadis Blurton and Elsa Valdez**

In case you haven't ever seen one before, let us point out that this is a baby newsletter. In fact, this is its first time out. We're going to try and nurture it and see how it grows. As Linda pointed out, a lot of that depends on you.

One of our goals is to set up specific, ongoing columns in the newsletter. In this issue, we have begun by including a column for foreign T.A.s. We will include this column in each issue. We will also keep up our "Did You Know" spots because it seems to us that a lot of us don't (know). But we would like to institute a few more regulars. Here are just a few suggestions.

1) "Letter to the Editor": Voice your opinions on such matters as articles and letters in previous issues, subjects we should feature in upcoming issues, or any other newsletter improvements.
2) "The Pedagogical Panel": Write a brief description of a personal classroom tutoring experience that was humorous, instructional, unusual, inspirational or otherwise influential to your teaching style, career aspirations, your view of the field, or whatever. (You may withhold your name.)
3) "The Alligator Pit": Register your complaints about any unworkable working condition. Ask for advice (from the Director of the TADP, the M.T.A.s or other readers) on how to handle a particular alligator or how to get out of a specific pit. Share a success story on how you emerged from one alive. (Again, we will withhold your name if you wish - in case the alligator still lurks!)
4) "Picture This": Submit an original, camera-ready cartoon about academic life.

We're open to additional ideas. Just bear in mind that *The Tadpole* is published three times a year: Fall, Winter and Spring quarters. To print your submissions in a specific quarter's issue, we must have your material in hand by the end of the previous quarter. (This year, obviously, there was no Fall issue, so your first deadline is the end of Winter quarter.)

Send or drop by all newsletter materials to the Teaching Assistant Development Program, 1110 Library South. The office is open 8 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1 p.m.-5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays except on administrative holidays. Not sure if a certain news item or story will fly? Call us at 3386 or 3387.

Submit all materials typewritten/word processed, double spaced, with your name, department, and campus phone and/or home phone. Please tell us if you would like your name and department withheld. We reserve the right to edit and to correct spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors. We cannot guarantee publication, as we have publication formats, page limitations, deadlines and standards of relevancy, professionalism, and good taste to maintain. But you can trust us to honor all well-intended contributions in the interest of UCR T.A.s. (And even an occasional not-well-intended contribution.)

**Jadis Blurton and Elsa Valdez are Master Teaching Assistants with the TADP. Jadis is working on her doctorate in developmental psychology and Elsa is working on her doctorate in sociology.*

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Special Topic: Teaching Evaluations!

Evaluating the Evaluation

*by Roger Hayes**

Okay, you've been videotaped. You went through the anxiety-laden and embarrassing process of baring your soul in front of the camera and then were forced to watch it (afraid that it would come back and haunt you in your dreams). Now what? Unless you're perfect (and none of us are) there are improvements that can be made in your teaching. As we implement these improvements, there are four things to keep in mind.

First, avoid the pitfall of trying to do too much or thinking that your entire teaching style needs to be changed. Focus on the one or at most two areas that are most important in improving your teaching. Once you've noted improvements and are comfortable with these areas, then look for others to work on.

Second, be quantitative about how you will improve. Don't just say to yourself, "I should do a better job in answering students' questions," or "Gee, I could really be more organized." Consciously build into your preparation specifics on how to improve problem areas. For example, make sure that you have built-in relevant and important questions to ask students so that you get practice and can concentrate on improving your questioning techniques. If organization needs improvement, endeavor to improve the specific organization of your notes. Many T.A.s have

Continued on Page 5

What Do the Students Know That You Don't?

*by Jadis Blurton**

You've seen the evaluation forms. In fact, you passed them out at the end of last quarter so that your students could grade you on such things as your knowledge of content and your presentation style. You will soon be getting them back. And since you are fairly well educated (and a little defensive) you will want to know whether these ratings have any reliability or validity and whether they really should have any influence at all on how much you enjoy your afternoon, not to mention whether or not you get hired for that tenure-track position you want.

Although rating scales differ slightly so that specific research about the scale used here at UCR is unavailable, quite a bit of research has been done on similar scales. Areas such as reliability, validity, dimensionality and usefulness have been explored.

Interrater agreement on well-designed teacher evaluations depends, of course, on the number of raters. Cashin and Perrin (1978) report interrater agreement of .69 with only ten raters and up to .89 with forty raters. So if you had ten students or less rating you, interpret the results with caution. But even if you had good interrater reliability, do these scores actually say something about you as a teacher? Marsh (1982)

Continued on Page 6

Methods to Improve Teaching Skills

*by Elsa Valdez**

Being appointed a teaching assistantship may be compared to being assigned to an apprenticeship through which a T.A. can acquire teaching competence. Since teaching is a learning process, it is important to recognize that, there is always room for improvement.

Inviting student feedback early in the quarter is one way for the T.A. to take corrective action rather than waiting for institutionally prescribed end-of-quarter evaluations. Written student evaluations can be in the form of rating scales or open-ended sentences. Rating scales include such questions as:

- Is the T.A. well-prepared and is the presentation well structured?
- Does the T.A. explain unfamiliar concepts clearly?
- Does the T.A. encourage questions and participation?
- Does the T.A. come across as helpful, friendly, and interested in the students' progress?

The following open-ended sentences have the advantage of allowing students to express their feelings in their own language:

- The best thing about you as a T.A. is...
- The thing I like least about you as a T.A. is...
- You can improve the quality of the discussion section by...

After identifying the areas that receive low evaluations, the T.A. may then work on improving in those areas. Writing down the changes the T.A. intends to implement in teaching is a useful way to determine a number of strategies for improving teaching skills. For example, if the student feedback indicates that the T.A.'s

Continued on Page 6

For the Foreign T.A.

Effective Communication

Obviously, being understood in a classroom may be difficult for some foreign T.A.s due to pronunciation and accent difficulties or nonverbal, culturally based differences. There are several things you can do to overcome these obstacles that will move you toward becoming an effective classroom communicator.

- Don't attempt to assume an American accent, because this may result in students concentrating on how you are speaking rather than on what you are saying. Instead, pronounce each word carefully and speak slowly.
- At the beginning of the quarter, tell your students that some sounds are particularly difficult for you to pronounce or understand. Ask them to help by speaking slowly and explaining themselves clearly. If you are having difficulty understanding what a student is saying, ask him or her to begin again, slow down, or explain it in some other words. Make sure that your students know that they may ask you to do the same when they do not understand what you are saying.
- Use the blackboard or visual aids extensively so that students can both hear and see what they need to learn. This is especially crucial during the first two or three discussion sections since students are adapting to your accent and style of communication. A well organized blackboard will give your presentation a structured appearance and result in increased confidence for both you and your students.
- Some students may try to use your accent as an excuse for not doing well in your class. You may find that some students will put up a mental wall the minute they hear your accent and will not attempt to understand your presentation. Be patient and stress the importance of paying attention to the

Continued on Page 5

Foreign T.A., Continued

material you present since it will help their performance on upcoming exams.

- Try to observe other T.A.s and faculty in action so that you can learn nonverbal communication behaviors. Pay attention to things like how much they move about in the classroom, how far they sit or stand from the person with whom they are interacting, eye contact, hand and arm movement, and facial expressions.
- Talk to a T.A. who has previously taught the course and ask for his or her input. You might ask the more experienced T.A. to attend a few of your sections so that he or she might give you suggestions for improving your classroom communication.
- Record your section and listen to the way you sound. Work on improving the words you have difficulty with. Of course, you may also request that your discussion section be videotaped by the T.A. Development Program or that a Master T.A. sit in on your section and do an evaluation.
- Be well prepared for your section. Carefully prepared course material will tend to make any problems you have with accent or grammar less noticeable. And if you present yourself as a confident T.A. with a good grasp of the material, students will make an extra effort to listen carefully to what you are saying.

Evaluating the Evaluation, Continued

the "will to improve, but neglect the "way".

Third, don't be overly concerned with presentation style (saying "uh" or scratching your armpit) unless it interferes with your imparting of information. If we divide the most common errors that T.A.s make into three categories -- style, content (organization, knowledge, clarity, etc.), and communication (openness, questioning techniques, respect for students, eye contact, etc.) -- style is the least important. It can be improved, but students will benefit more from improved content and communications skills.

Finally, be videotaped again. The worst part of it is over; you've already been videotaped once. Watching yourself gets a little easier each time (although I still think my voice is too squeaky ... must be a hardware problem). If you're serious about the quality of your instruction and have tried to improve, the improvement will be noticeable in subsequent video-tapings, giving you the incentive to continue to improve. Remember that good teaching is a skill, not magic. This implies that it's something that can be improved with instruction, practice and evaluation. Much like my tennis game, it's not easy and requires a lot of work, but the rewards are highly satisfying. Good luck!!

* *Roger Hayes is the Senior Learning Skills Counselor at the Learning Center and is a valued consultant to the TADP.*

Did You Know...

that T.A.s who are hired for more than 17.5 hours per week (that is, all half-time T.A.s) are eligible for faculty/staff parking? In order to get a sticker, you must get a work verification form from parking services, have it signed by your department, then return it with a copy of your Personnel Action Form to Parking Services. Faculty/Staff parking costs $48.00 a quarter while student parking is only $30.00, but some of us think the extra cost is worth it!

Did You Know...

that you don't have to be a beginning T.A. to ask for a videotape of your teaching, and if you are a new T.A. you don't have to stop at just one taping? The tapes can be used by anyone who would like to see his or her lecture from the students' point of view. The tapes may then be reviewed either privately or with a trained videotape consultant. Call the TADP (3386 or 3387) for more information. Faculty?

Improving Teaching, Continued

assignments are often unclear, the T.A. can map out a course of action to correct the problem:

1. Use the blackboard, give handouts, or use other visual aids to supplement explanations.
2. Use more examples to define new concepts.
3. Stop and ask students if they have questions.

It is important that the T.A. focus on a few problematic areas at a time so that improvement does not seem overwhelming. When writing down improvement strategies, the T.A. should make sure they are specific and attainable. Finally, the plan for improvement must be flexible so that strategies that prove inadequate can be thrown out and strategies that prove effective can be incorporated into a teaching repertoire.

**Elsa Valdez is an MTA, working on her doctorate in sociology, and is associate editor of The Tadpole.*

What Do the Students Know, Continued

studied data from 1,364 courses and found that the correlations between ratings of the same teacher teaching the same course (different semesters) were .71 while correlations between ratings for different teachers teaching the same course were .14. Correlations between the ratings from two different courses taught by the same professor were .52, while correlations between ratings from two different courses taught by different professors were .06. Obviously, the teacher is carrying something over from course to course even though the course itself seems to have a bit of its own influence. Marsh concludes that it is the instructor, not the course, that is the most important determinant of student ratings of teaching.

If the goal of classroom teaching is to impart knowledge, an important measure of the validity of these scales might be to compare them to the achievement of the students in the class. Cohen (1981) found that classes in which students score better on an external exam also rated their professor more highly. Interestingly, the scores on the exam correlated most with the teacher's ability to explain things clearly (.50), but least with the teacher's ability to facilitate classroom discussion (.22).

It seems on the face of it that many things might interfere with an accurate reflection of the teacher's ability. Isn't it possible that students would rate Quasimodo lower than Robert Redford, even in a bell-ringing class? There are several possible sources of bias in this kind of evaluation, and it is somewhat surprising to find out that some you would expect to be important don't seem to be. It is also a little dis-

Continued on Page 7

Did You Know...

that you can buy a copy of your videotape for $10.00 from the TADP if you act fast! If you were videotaped for us at any time during the year of 1989, and would like a copy of that video, call or come by the TADP offices. All past videos will be erased after January 20th, though, so you must let us know by then.

What Do the Students Know, Continued

heartening to learn that some you hadn't even thought of seem to be important. We can divide the possible sources of bias into instructor variables, course variables, and student variables.

The instructor variables that do not seem to be important are the instructor's sex, age and teaching experience, or most aspects of personality. One study did find the age variable to be important, but the effect was negative: older instructors received lower ratings! (Feldman, 1986) What does seem to be important to the ratings is faculty rank (teaching assistants don't do as well as regular faculty). Interestingly, one study (Sullivan & Skanes, 1974) also found that the ratings for regular faculty were more closely related to students' achievement than were ratings for T.A.s. It is possible that "when students feel they have learned a great deal in a course they are more likely to attribute their success to their own efforts if their teacher was a teaching assistant and more likely to give the teacher some credit if the teacher is a professor". (McKeachie, 1979).

Student variables that do not effect the ratings are the students' ages, sex, level (e.g., year in school), GPA, or personality. What does seem to be important is the student's motivation, prior interest, and expected grade.

Ratings do not seem to be related to class size or class time, but are related to the course level (higher level courses receive higher ratings), field (arts and humanities courses receive higher ratings than social science courses, which in turn receive higher ratings than math-science courses), and workload. Strangely enough, workload and ratings are positively correlated - higher ratings are given to classes that have a heavy workload! (Cashin, 1988).

Some studies (c.f. Marsh, 1984) have found that ratings are higher if the directions state that they are to be used for personnel decisions. If the students feel that the ratings are simply used by the instructor for self-improvement, they are likely to be more critical. (Most undergraduates are unaware of the uses of these evaluations and it doesn't hurt to explain them.)

Once you have your evaluations, there are several things you should keep in mind while interpreting them. First, the evaluations measure several different aspects (dimensions) of teaching. It makes a lot more sense to look at your strengths and weaknesses than it does to try to average all of the points together. Second, the comments are critical - if you do not get a copy of them, ask for one or ask to have them read to you. (I have a faculty friend who tells me that once she was rated at the lowest end on all points of an evaluation, which naturally lowered her class average by quite a bit. The comment at the bottom of that evaluation was "just kidding.") Third, be sure and look at the spread of the evaluations: is the class fairly unanimous in rating you as average or did some students think you were the best teacher since Socrates and others think you were just awful? If you did get a bi-

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The Tadpole is published by the Teaching Assistant Development Program,
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Elsa Valdez: Associate Editor Jadis Blurton: Associate Editor
Linda Nilson: Director, TADP

What Do the Students Know, Continued

modal distribution, can you explain it? It will help to look at the comments on your low scorers.

There is considerable evidence that teaching evaluations can be very useful in improving instruction: Overall and Marsh (1977) found that students whose instructors had received previous feedback not only rated their instructors higher at the end of the year but also achieved more and had higher motivation in the subject studied. How useful they are to you will depend on how seriously you take them, how carefully you interpret them, and how systematically you address the problems they reveal.

**Jadis Blurton is an MTA, working on her doctorate in psychology, and is associate editor of The Tadpole.*

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Next Issue: Do you ever feel like one of those circus performers balancing fifteen plates on a pole from his teeth? If you stop paying attention to one for an instant is it all going to come crashing to the ground? Is your research interfering with your classes which are interfering with your T.A.-ship which is interfering with your home life/social life/marriage/kids? Tune in next quarter for "Life in the Fast Lane", a look at stress, time management, and the life of a T.A. And we do want contributions - if you can find the time!

The Tadpole

A Newsletter for Teaching Assistants
At the University of California, Riverside

Volume I Spring, 1990 Number 2

The Director's Chair

More Power To You

No, I'm not going to wax on about a TA's power to shape an undergraduate's mind and values. Not this time, anyway. Instead I'm going to salute your power to influence University policies ... specifically, UCR's approach to TA training. As many of you will recall, the TADP asked this year's first-year TAs to fill out a number of program evaluation forms and to suggest improvements in our TA Orientation and training seminars. Every word was read. Never underestimate the power of suggestion!

You wanted more workshops at the TA Orientation? Instead of four workshops, we'll be offering a choice of six in three time slots at the 1990 event next September. You disliked the grueling, all-day "Super Saturday" TA Training? So did we. "Super Saturday" is hereby cancelled. New TAs will receive their training in the five-week TADP seminars, except in those departments with their own training programs. You didn't care much for TADP's one-size-fits-all interdisciplinary training? Some of us, including me, weren't entranced with it either. We knew that section activities and formats vary across disciplines. Thanks to your suggestions, we have a much improved plan for next year. We'll be giving "disciplinary cluster" TA training seminars - not just one for all, but three different seminars designed for new TAs in different disciplinary groups. This fresh approach is an economical means of meeting TA training needs on a relatively small but departmentally diverse campus such as ours. It also represents a genuine innovation in TA training nationwide. The eyes of other universities will be focused on us.

Linda Nilson

Linda Nilson
Director, TADP

The Bulletin Board

We're Looking for a Few Good Master Teaching Assistants

For the 1990-91 Academic Year

The TADP invites applications for 1990-91 Master Teaching Assistants (50% time Teaching Fellow rank). MTAs hold multifaceted responsibilities involving the training of new TAs and assistance with program administration.

PRIMARY DUTIES: developing and conducting TA training seminars; planning and coordinating the TA Orientation; videotape viewing/ observation and evaluation of TA sections; newsletter writing/editing and production; counseling/advising of TAs;

Requirements:

* **Availability to 1) assume a 50% time (20 hours/week) position for either the academic year or Fall 1990, and 2) attend three weeks of intensive, full-time training and planning from Tuesday, September 4 through Friday, September 21, 1990.**
* **Two or more years of experience as a TA at UCR.**
* **High teaching evaluations.**
* **Excellent writing, interpersonal, and organizational skills.**
* **Good academic standing; Quals completed by Fall, 1990.**
* **Typing/word processing skills helpful.**

Salary: **$13,446 (10/1/90-6/30/91) plus $1,272.32 for three-week training/planning sessions.**

To Apply: **Send the following to Dr. Linda B. Nilson, Director, TADP, 1110 Library South, by 5 PM, Friday, May 11, 1990:**

1. **Cover Letter stating qualifications and why you want to be an MTA.**
2. **Current curriculum vita OR Biography for Academic Personnel.**
3. **Letter of recommendation from your Graduate Advisor or a supervising faculty member in your department.**

Strong candidates will be scheduled for personal interviews between Wednesday, May 16, and Friday, June 8. The 90-minute interview will include a short teaching performance in which you will explain one or two teaching methods that have worked well for you.

Special Topic: life in the Fast lane...

STOP **Stop! Before you read the rest of this newsletter, note the time. Write it down. Trust me. I'll get back to you.**

Stress Management

*by Tina Arias**

Stress can be described as a non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. It has become a focal point of health in our country, especially recently. In fact, diseases associated with stress have been reported to be the leading cause of death in the United States. Diseases and disorders such as hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, migraine headaches, stomach ulcers, colitis, asthma and mental/emotional problems all have been linked to stress.

The first step in managing stress is to identify your own stressors and symptoms. What causes stress in your life? It may be coming from the external environment -- for

Continued on Page 4

Indexing Your Life

The fact is that given a choice between aspirin and index cards, anyone with any sense will choose the index cards: they're cheaper and they get rid of more headaches. Index cards can be used to organize your daily activities, your phone files, your bigger projects, and your TA assignments.

The simplest way to use index cards is as a running calendar. (They are especially helpful if you are the type of person that likes to check things off as they are accomplished.) Make a card for each chore you do daily, weekly, and so on. Make two sets of dividers - one labelled with the days of the week and one with the numbers 1 - 31. Place each card

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For the Foreign T.A.

Cultural Assumptions in the American Classroom

*From the TA at UCLA Newsletter Winter, 1987 (Issue #19)**

American university students hold some basic assumptions about the purpose and function of an undergraduate education. Since these assumptions are based on a culture that probably differs from your own, this list of underlying assumptions and resulting attitudes and behaviors will enable you to understand your students' classroom behavior and expectations of you.

1. A primary goal of education is to *develop independent thinking*. Students may challenge or want to critically discuss ideas presented by the teacher; this will generally be interpreted positively (depending on the student's manner) as a sign of independence and interest. Passive student behavior is negatively evaluated ("sheep").

2. A primary goal of undergraduate education is to *expose the student to a wide range of ideas and fields of knowledge*; specialization is assumed to occur later in college, and in post-graduate education. In introductory courses in particular, there will be many students who (1) have little or no background in the field or related fields; (2) are not necessarily interested in the subject matter and do not plan to continue in it.

3. Teachers and students are in a cooperative enterprise to help the student succeed in understanding the course material and *both have some responsibility for the student's success*. Students expect teachers to care about their progress and take their difficulties seriously.

4. *The right to a good education is seen as a fundamental right of all citizens*. Every student may feel they have equal access to the teacher's time and attention (regardless of whether they are majors or non-majors, male or female) and will watch for teacher favoritism.

5. *Students have rights, both as individuals and consumers*, in their educational process. Students feel they have the right to control aspects of their education and to have education be made relevant to their lives; moreover, since they and their family are paying money to the university, they may treat their classes as a product which must demonstrate its worth.

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Stress, Continued from Page 3

example, battling the traffic, problems in school, or the actions of others. Or it may come from internal problems among your thoughts, feelings and expectations. These stressors, in turn, cause adverse physical symptoms, emotions and behaviors that are seen as warning signs of stress. The key is to become aware of these events as they happen and learn to control your response to them. Keeping a stress log of daily stressful events and your own reactions may be helpful.

A form of stress common to many graduate students is test or evaluation anxiety. Anxiety concerning test taking can cause mental distraction, physiological nervousness and mental blocks which can prove to be very frustrating. As a graduate student, you probably have already developed good study and test-taking skills. Use them, and use a schedule for studying,

Continued on Page 5

Stress, Continued from Page 4

just as you did when you were an undergraduate.

One practical approach to alleviating generalized stress is relaxation. True relaxation is a skill that you can learn and use when you need it. It is recommended that you practice these techniques daily so that you can gain better control of your body's physiological reactions to stress. The following are some effective exercises used in relaxation training:

1. Breathing: Take a deep breath, counting slowly from one to four. Hold the breath for two counts and exhale slowly, again counting from one to four. Repeat several times.

2. Progressive Relaxation: Beginning with your feet, tighten muscles for four to seven seconds and then relax completely for ten to twenty seconds, noticing the difference between the tense and relaxed states. Repeat the procedure on muscle groups throughout your entire body, relaxing part by part.

3. Visualization: Imagine yourself in a very pleasant scene - one in which you feel very comfortable. Try and feel as though you are actually there, vividly imagining all five of your senses at work.

4. Autogenics: Focus on a specific part of your body (your hands, for example), and repeat several times to yourself the phrase "my hands are warm and heavy." You can repeat this using other parts of your body and other phrases.

Other coping strategies that you might find helpful in managing stress are exercising, getting sufficient rest, balancing work with play, and maintaining a positive mental attitude. The important thing to remember is that stress can be controlled using the proper skills and strategies!

Stress management and relaxation training is available through the Biofeedback Program in the Counseling Center (787-5531).

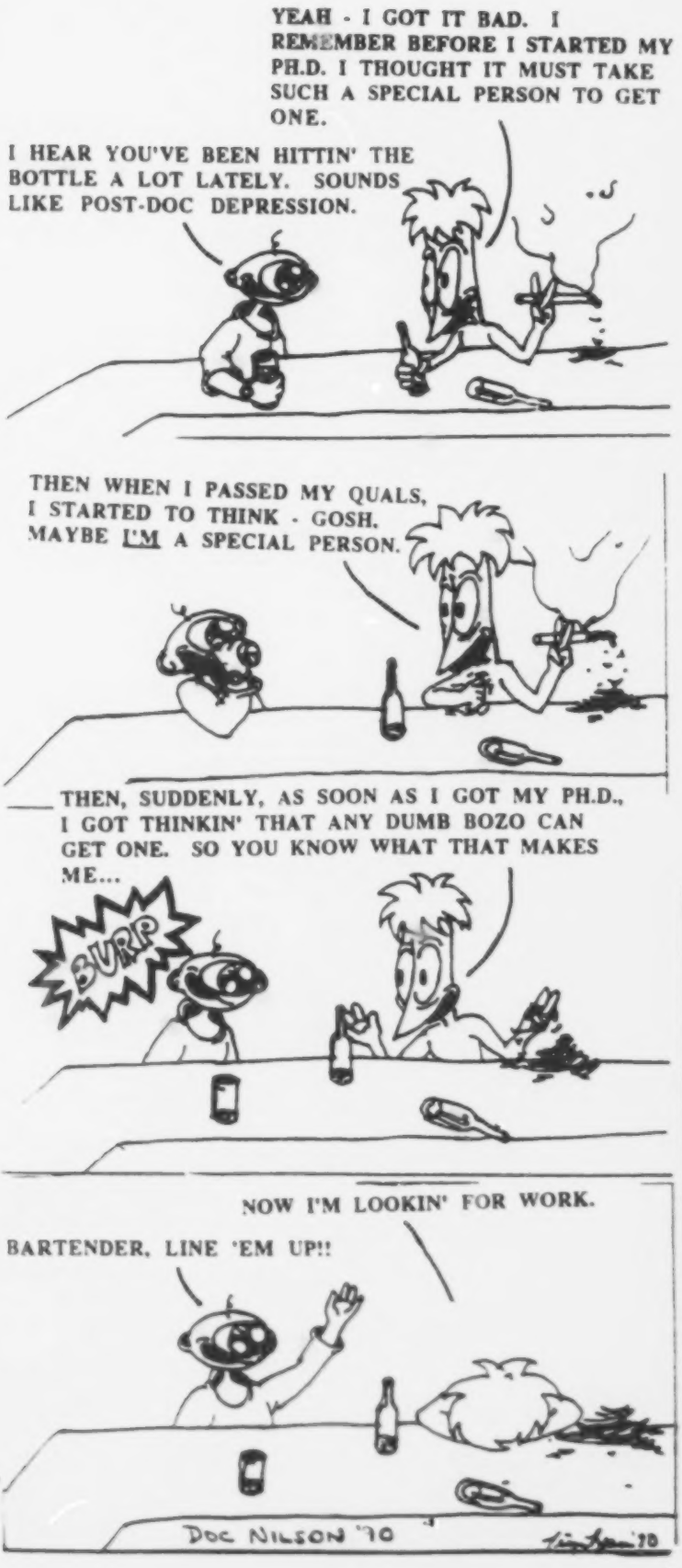
* *Tina Arias is Testing and Research Coordinator at the Counseling Center.*

Did You Know...

that all TA section videotapes made by the TADP during the Winter and Spring quarters (1990) will be erased on Friday, June 15? If you wish to purchase your tape, you must do so before June 15, 1990.

Creating a 5-Minute Box

Sometimes, what is overwhelming is not so much the amount of time it will take you to do things but the number of things you must do. It may be useful to create a 5-minute box, both at home and at work, that holds the tasks that can be completed quickly in the few moments between classes - or even during a television commercial in the evening at home! (Many of these tasks may be phone calls that need to be made. If you don't have time to make or return a call, simply jot down the number on an index card and toss it in the box.) When you have got a few minutes free, you can choose one of the tasks in the 5-minute box to get out of the way. In fact, if you get into the habit of doing one or two 5-minute tasks every hour, you will find that your stress level is reduced tremendously. While this will not necessarily mean that your life will be less busy, it most certainly will mean that your life will be less cluttered!


YEAH - I GOT IT BAD. I REMEMBER BEFORE I STARTED MY PH.D. I THOUGHT IT MUST TAKE SUCH A SPECIAL PERSON TO GET ONE.
I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN HITTIN' THE BOTTLE A LOT LATELY. SOUNDS LIKE POST-DOC DEPRESSION.
THEN WHEN I PASSED MY QUALS, I STARTED TO THINK - GOSH. MAYBE I'M A SPECIAL PERSON.
THEN, SUDDENLY, AS SOON AS I GOT MY PH.D., I GOT THINKIN' THAT ANY DUMB BOZO CAN GET ONE. SO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MAKES ME...
BURP
NOW I'M LOOKIN' FOR WORK.
BARTENDER, LINE 'EM UP!!
DOC NILSON '90
Tim Ryan '90

Now That You Have Leisure Time...

Now that you have read our time-management issue, you will of course have time to spare. And being relative novices at leisure, you will be at a loss as to how to do it well. Never let it be said that we neglect any aspect of TA life! We at the TADP are prepared to provide the necessary wine suggestions.

If you are looking for a white wine, we suggest Fetzer's Gewurztraminer, a sweeter German wine. If you are looking for a red wine, we suggest the Sebastiani Zinfandel, which is a heavy red wine much like a cabernet. We are aware that while you may be rich in time, you are still probably less than abundant in other areas (like money), so each of our suggestions costs between $3.00 and $5.00. If you want to splurge, Kenwood's Sauvignon Blanc and the 1987 Lytton Springs Zinfandel are both excellent wines for around $10 (white and red, respectively). Try them. Invite us...

Did You Know...

that Tim Ryan, the artist for the TADPole, is a fourteen-year old eighth grader at Golden Valley Junior High in San Bernardino? Not only has Tim designed our mascot for the mastheads, but he has illustrated this issue's cartoon.

When we asked one of his friends what we should say about Tim, his friend told us that Tim is funny and has a good personality. So we won't dwell on the fact that Tim is also incredibly bright and we will let his obvious talent speak for itself. Tim would like to be an artist when he grows up. We at the TADP don't think he has anything to worry about!

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Are You Kidding?
by Jadis Blurton

The fact is that there are few things about which I can truly be called an expert. Going to school with kids is one. I have six kids (no that's not a typo) and I've been a graduate student since the Stone Age. So here are some concrete suggestions that I hope will make your life a little easier:

1. If your child is preschool or early elementary-aged, buy him or her a "briefcase" (bookbag) that is as much like yours as possible. Fill it with coloring books, activity books, crayons, and so on. Put it up in your closet so that it is always ready for those times that your child is going to have to come to UCR with you (she's sick, his school is out, she has lice...).
2. Just as you have office hours, you have to have home hours. Unless you are studying for quals or it is the night before a final, give the hours from four or five to bedtime (the child's, that is) to your family. At the same time, unless your child has a doctor's appointment or is being awarded a Nobel Prize, make the hours from at least ten A.M. to four P. M. work and/or study hours.
3. If you have a very young child or infant, be sure that you spend the extra time necessary to find a babysitter that you really love. If you don't, you will not be able to justify leaving the baby for long enough to read that suggested article. And you know you won't read it if the baby is home and awake.
4. Use index cards (see "Indexing your Life," this issue) to help you get and stay organized. Index cards are great for organizing food. Plan a month's worth of menus. Put the recipe for each night on an index card, and file that card under the appropriate date. Also make a shopping list for the week (based on that week's menus) and place it under the appropriate shopping day. At the end of the month, repeat the same menus - and the same shopping lists.
5. You can also use index cards for your phone file. There is a lot of flexibility here. For example, I have a "Chris" card for my son that has his medical insurance number, social security number, teacher's name, and so on. I also have a card labelled "Chris's friends" on which he has listed the phone numbers of all his buddies.
6. Make sure that everyone that is old enough to understand does understand that you are doing important work. This means that they will have to assist in chores that in other families might fall to whomever is in your role. In other words, teach your kids to do the laundry and mow the lawn.
7. Older children require a lot of driving (to drama, ballet, little league, band, lessons, soccer practice...). If you have a teenager, get him or her that driver's licence fast, and make driving for you (and younger children) a condition of driving your car.
8. You often hear people say not to sweat the small stuff. I've found that the small stuff can be very annoying and often is easily resolved once you pay some attention to it. For example, I was annoyed when my teenager used my car because it was often out of gas in the morning when I went to work. As soon as I focused on the problem (rather than steaming about it), I got him a gas card and made keeping the car gassed up his responsibility. He's happy, and I never have to pump gas!
9. Schedule time to relax away from school and kids...in fact, away from any guilt at all. It's a requirement. DO IT.
10. Finally, accept the fact that now may not be your shining moment. Your colleagues, against whom you may be compared, often have no spouse and no kids to worry about. But in ten years, when they have five year olds, your kids will be in college! HA!

** Jadis Blurton is an MTA, working on her doctorate in psychology, and editor of The TADPole.*

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Linda Nilson: Director, TADP

Indexing Your Life, Continued

under the appropriate day and refile it as the task is completed. For example, place daily chores under Monday and refile them under Tuesday as you complete them on Monday. (If they only have to be done every other day, refile them under Wednesday.) For larger tasks, file them under the date you expect to DO them (NOT the date they are DUE). If you can't get to them on that date, refile them. You can always work ahead in your file box if you find extra time or refile cards if it looks like you have loaded up one day or one week.

Make a phone file that operates like a large roladex. You can file one number under several headings (Advisor, Dr. Blimbott, Department Office, etc.). You can also make notes about that person or office directly on the card (office hours, birthday, classes, directions to his or her home, and so on). When you no longer need the card, you can simply throw it out. The system has all the advantages of a roladex, but is large enough to be more versatile and include more information... and it's cheap!

I Said I'd Be Back... (From Page 3)

How much time have you spent reading this edition of The TADPole? How accurate are your perceptions of time? From my own experience, I know that a minute can be both short and long. It just depends on how you use it.

We undertake tasks (grading, preparing for class, etc.) based on our perception of how much time they will take. Subsequently, we justify procrastinating because "there wasn't any time," and the stress levels rise. To avoid this trap, try working with the time you have. See how much you can accomplish in five to fifteen minutes. This time can be used to grade a few more papers, reflect on life, or implement the relaxation techniques discussed in this issue.

Be aware of your time and how you use it. In fact, by being aware of how you spend your time and by using your spare moments to finish tasks, you may find that you have a few more minutes than you thought to relax or to spend talking with friends and colleagues.

Next Issue: Are you spending hours and hours on a task that should take half as long? Are you worried that you are not being fair, consistent, or objective? Is your life a constant worry about that greatest of all TA problems? No - not bad breath - GRADING! Would you like a few hints? Would you like to *share* a few hints of your own? Send them along, and then tune in next quarter for "Making the Grade," an evaluation of our evaluations.

The TADPole

Published for TAs
by the Teaching Assistant Development Program
of the University of California, Riverside

Volume 2 Fall 1990 Number 1

The Director's Chair

DEPARTMENTS AND THE TADP: PARTNERS IN TA TRAINING

The TADP has a double-edged goal: to run the best possible campuswide TA training program while encouraging departments to set up their own programs. Of course, the better the training we provide, the harder it is to convince departments to do their own. We can't win. But we can't lose. Nor can our TAs.

Still, the best TA training is departmental--tailored to the specific discipline. I don't mind saying so because I developed and for four years administered such a program in the Sociology Department at UCLA. So I'm pleased that several departments are now joining the ranks of Chemistry, English, Math/Computer Science, Music, Physics and Spanish in initiating their own programs: Art History (as of Winter 1990), Dance, History and Statistics (teaming up with Math and Computer Science). Most departments, however, can't spare the resources (e.g., faculty time) or don't have the critical TA mass to afford their own program, especially while our campus is growing so rapidly.

With a centralized program like the TADP, all TAs can share in greater resources than any one department can afford: this TA newsletter; our expanding Teaching Resource Library of books, handbooks, articles and tapes (in 1110 Library South); and the TADP staff. Our Master TAs--all carefully selected from among the finest of your peers and intensively trained for their position--can suggest fresh instructional strategies, help you polish your teaching style and even serve as conflict mediators. They're here to help you, whether you're a first-year or a fifth-year TA.

Linda Nilson
Director, TADP

The Bulletin Board

Letters to the Editor

The first edition of The TADPole brought a special pleasure to me. I remembered so clearly my years as a T.A. How far we have come!

The Teaching Assistant Development Program is a pride of the campus, and I am confident that the academic lives of countless undergraduate and graduate students are positively impacted.

I am grateful for your efforts and commitment.

Rosemary S.J. Schraer, Chancellor

A consortium of four county offices (Riverside, Inyo, Mono and San Bernardino--RIMS), and the districts they serve, have been notified that "pending State Board approval," funds will be granted to provide staff development services for three years. We would like to invite you to become a part of the resource bank by: 1. Submitting 50 copies of written materials listing areas of expertise, references, and fee schedules. 2. If possible, submitting with the above materials, one copy of a ten-minute video or audio tape which demonstrates speaking/working style and interaction with an audience. Persons responsible for establishing programs are trying to decide if you would work well with their particular group.

Please send all materials to: San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Attention: Dr. Marilyn Bush, 601 North "E" Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093.

Critical areas of need include: 1. Ways/suggestions for integrating academic subjects with health issues, physical education, music, art, literature, etc. 2. Instructional strategies related to the State frameworks: cooperative learning, technology in the classroom, developing higher level thinking skills, cross-age/peer tutoring, etc. 3. How to work with/help students demonstrating special needs from: infant drug addiction, physical/sexual/psychological abuse, low self esteem, malnutrition and/or poor health, homelessness and/or high mobility, etc. 4. How to establish high expectations and maximize success for students from diverse cultures and/or who speak a language other than English.

Your knowledge is needed. We hope you decide to participate.

Marilyn Bush, Ed.D., Director of Programs

SPECIAL TOPIC:

MAKING THE GRADE

THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORK: ASSIGNING AND EVALUATING STUDENT WRITING

by Dr. Dan Donlan, School of Education

YOU DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND A CONCEPT UNTIL YOU CAN ARTICULATE IT. The old saying has wisdom. In fact, it could be argued that well-designed essay tests and papers assess student knowledge and understanding better than do recognition tests. However, essays cannot be machine scored, and therein lies their stigma. Yet, there are valid and reliable methods of "quick scoring" large numbers of essays. One of these is the single impression method.

Suppose you teach a class of 200 students and you want to assign a fairly brief library paper, but you are dreading the time required to read and comment extensively on 200 ten-page papers. How would you implement single impression scoring?

Step 1: Determine the Paper's Critical Features. Decide the basic elements you believe all 200 library reports should have, e.g.: 1. organization, 2. clarity and logic, 3. thoroughness and 4. appropriate format.

Step 2: Convert Critical Elements into a Description of the Perfect Paper.

EXAMPLE OF AN PAPER: The A paper is extremely well organized, beginning with a comprehensive overview, with a succession of major assertions all supported with unequivocally valid evidence, and with a conclusion that most appropriately reflects the evidence. The major assertions are presented with exceptional clarity and logic using one controlling principle: e.g., chronological, climactic. The paper reflects exhaustive use of library resources, with emphasis on primary sources. The paper models APA format impeccably.

Step 3: Describe What Would Be a Problematic Paper.

EXAMPLE OF A D PAPER: The D paper is badly organized, beginning with a weak or nonexistent overview, with unfocused assertions unsupported by valid evidence, and with a weak or nonexistent conclusion or one that does not appropriately reflect the evidence. The major assertions are unclearly presented and there is no clear pattern of logical development. The paper shows minimal use of library resources, with emphasis on secondary or tertiary sources. The paper fails to adhere to APA format.

Step 4: Describe an Above Average (B) Paper and an Average (C) Paper.

EXAMPLE OF A B PAPER: The B paper is well organized, beginning with a fairly comprehensive overview, with a succession of major assertions all supported in sound evidence, and with a conclusion that most generally reflects the evidence. The major assertions are presented with clarity and logic using one controlling principle: e.g., chronological,

(Continued on Page 4)

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climactic. The paper reflects extensive use of library resources, with emphasis on primary sources. The paper generally models APA format with only one or two problem areas.

EXAMPLE OF A C PAPER: The C paper is somewhat well organized, beginning with a functional overview, with a succession of major assertions supported in by some kind of evidence, and with a conclusion that at most tries to reflect the evidence or which merely summarizes the paper. The major assertions are generally presented with clarity and logic with the writer attempting to use one controlling principle: e.g., chronological, climactic. The paper reflects adequate use of library resources, with emphasis on primary sources. The paper generally follows APA format.

Step 5: Sampling Your four descriptions constitute a scoring guide. To test its potential effectiveness, take a small random sample of, say, 15 papers. Read them carefully to see (1) if your critical elements are reflected in the papers and (2) how the papers distribute themselves according to your four grades. If your scoring guide is effective and your sampling is random, you should have a sample (N=15) distribution somewhat like: 2-3 A's, 5-6 B's, 5-6 C's and 1-2 D's.

Step 6: Rapid Reading of All Papers. Once you are convinced that your scoring guide is useful and your sampling is random, read through the balance of the papers quickly, assigning one of four designations: A, B., C, or D (or 1, 2, 3, 4). You need place no other marks on the papers other that the quality designation. When you are through, take a brief sample of papers to check your consistency over time.

Step 7: Return Papers to Students, along with copies of your scoring guide. Direct the students to match their grade with the descriptions on the scoring guide.

Variations

1. The scoring guide discussed in this article used four quality designations. You could develop a scoring guide that used 3, 5, 6, or 10 designations.

2. If student writing is marred by an excessive number of problems in spelling, punctuation, and usage, drop the student's quality score by one full designation. Do not feel compelled to correct a paper; merely indicate that you have deducted a point for significantly inaccurate language.

3. Use the scoring guide as a basis for conferring with students about their grades. Before allowing a student to discuss a grade, direct the student to analyze in writing his or her own paper with the scoring guide.

4. The single impression scoring method is only one of many kinds of holistic scoring procedures that you can use in evaluating students' writing. It first found its way into popular use when universities required entering freshmen to write essays for diagnosis and placement. More recently, when the California Legislature passed AB 65, all school districts in California having to provide a test of writing proficiency, turned to the universities for assistance in learning how to use single impression scoring.

GRADING HINT #1

MULTIPLE CHOICE GRADING IN MINUTES

by Linda Nilson, TADP Director
(With thanks to the TA at UCLA who taught her the trick.)

If you're facing the task of grading a small tower of multiple choice exams--or exams with a sizeable multiple choice section--and your professor isn't keyed into a Scantron(R) system, here's a way to make quick, mindless work of a long, mindless chore. Arrange with your professor to type up and photocopy a separate answer sheet with columns of a's, b's, c's, etc. Then before grading, take an unused answer sheet and punch holes through all the correct answers. (You can fold the paper and punch "half holes" with a hand puncher.) And presto! You have a grid to place over each student's answer sheet that instantly reveals whether he/she has marked/circled the correct answer! (Be sure to line up the grid correctly.) If the correct answer isn't marked, just put a line over it in your favorite colored pen. Then count up the number of your marks to obtain the number of incorrect answers. It's like being your own Scantron machine. This simple system saves significant time if you have over 400 items to grade (e.g., 10 40-item tests, 20 20-item tests or 40 10-item tests.).

If you and your professor are interested in going Scantron, several departments on campus have them--GSM, Biology, the Learning Center and possibly a few more. The University Bookstore sells standard Scantron forms with five-answer options.

GRADING HINT #2

PC POWER

by Merri Lynn Lacey, MTA, TADP

Personalize your grading comments using the power of your personal computer. Create individualized letters to your students of the comments you'd normally squeeze into the margin of a his/her paper. You will probably find that many of these comments apply to more than one student. You can "block and copy" appropriate comments to multiple letters. By placing a page break at the end of each letter, you can print out the entire class's letters as a single file. In the letter, you can provide students with examples of good work and also direct them to campus services if necessary.

One benefit of this technique is that the students are more likely to read their letter and therefore understand where they can improve and why they got "that grade." Another benefit is that you now have a record of these comments for your own reference.

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TA

Student Attitudes from The International Teaching Assistant Handbook: An Introduction to University and College Teaching in the United States, 1986*

Understanding student attitudes can be difficult at times. TAs from many diverse cultures have expressed surprise about the informality of American students. The degree of student informality varies from university to university and from one part of the country to another. On the whole, America students dress and act more casually than students in most other countries. Such informality may feel disrespectful to many international TAs, and it may take time for the TA to understand and tolerate some of the more casual behavior of Americans.

In some universities it is not uncommon to see students eating or drinking in the classroom. Attendance and promptness may also be lax. One international TA explained he was very upset when students came to his class late or left early. At first, he thought students left class because of something he was doing or saying. Later he found out that, unlike in his country, many students have full or part-time jobs, are married and have child-rearing responsibilities or have other commitments that make it necessary for them to leave class early or arrive late.

Student attitudes toward faculty and TAs can also be very informal or casual. Students do not usually show formal signs of respect for the teacher, such as standing up when the teacher enters the classroom. At some colleges and universities, students are accustomed to calling TAs and sometimes even faculty by their first names.

From one perspective, this informality can be viewed as a sign of respect in the American culture. It can imply that the individuals who are respected for their work and position can also be respected for their ability to remain humble in light of their accomplishments. In other words, they are seen as less egotistical than if they insisted on being referred to by title.

A student attitude that can be disconcerting to both American and international TAs is apathy or lack of interest in course material. Commonly, TAs expect undergraduate students to be highly motivated in their studies, but they often experience many of them as being apathetic in the classroom. One way of explaining this TA perception is that TAs often teach lower division survey courses. Many students must take these courses to fulfill requirements needed for graduation. Such courses are often out of the students' area of emphasis and also out of their area of interest. As a result, these students may show little motivation for the course other than the motivation to receive a passing grade.

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DID YOU KNOW...

That the Counseling Center organizes qual-study and dissertation support groups upon the request of enough graduate students? Just a few of you can make a group go. Call Timothy DeChenne, Assistant Director, at x5531, or drop by Veitch Student Center to express your interest.

IT'S OK TO FAIL

by the TADP Staff

Failure, like pain, is nature's way of letting us know something is wrong. You will have to deal at some time with students who have fallen short of the minimum expectations of a course. This can be a challenging and emotional situation. But you can often use this failure to the student's benefit.

Poor performance by a student signals a problem in one of several areas. The student may 1) lack motivation towards the course, 2) not have developed adequate study habits or 3) simply not have the ability/talent to master this subject. You as the TA are in the position to attempt to motivate through your own enthusiasm for a subject, creative teaching strategies, etc. In addition, you can suggest specific techniques for study or practice in a subject, while directing the student to the Learning Resource Center for the basics in academic survival. The third explanation is the hardest to accept.

No matter how well we teach, there will always be students who fail, especially in large introductory courses. These failures may be frustrating for instructors and traumatic for the students, but they also hold the greatest potential for future success. These are the students that don't belong in your major field. Their talents are in Art, not Accounting, or English, not Biology.

Honesty is a must in dealing with these students. Don't try to "sugar-coat" the situation or "be a nice guy." Giving students grades that misrepresent their achievement in a course ("because they really made an effort") only postpones the inevitable and causes them greater problems in the long run. Discussions of a student's failure should always focus on academics and never on failure in life. Use your insights as a graduate student and a TA to point out the student's strengths. Any positive comments or insights to a student's talent will help his/her self-esteem. Avoid becoming a career counselor, but share your impressions and refer the student to a faculty advisor or other professional if need be. To help prevent or circumvent failing students, it is vital that they receive frequent and informed feedback on their progress in a class. Short written assignments, quizzes, small group discussions, etc., will allow you--and the student--to identify potential problems. Dropping a class is preferable to receiving a failing grade and losing a quarter of useful instruction.

CONGRATULATIONS TO TADP'S AWARD-WINNING ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT!

As we all know, the University's wheels turn on the competence and commitment of its staff. At least not all its heros (usually, heroines) are unsung.

Our own beloved BJ (Barbara-Jean) Corriveau, the TADP's AA and The TADPole's Associate Editor, was among the very select few to receive a Special Staff Performance Award for 1989-90. Why? Just call or visit our office and you'll see how deftly she blends a delightful disposition with administrative savvy and efficiency.

UC Riverside means business with these awards. They come with a $1000 honorarium, which the Chancellor presents at an elegant reception.

GRADING HINT #3

STACKING THE ODDS

by Merri Lynn Lacey, MTA, TADP

Grading a stack of essays is a drag! On top of that, are you sure that your standards are the same for the first and last essay that you read? One way to deal with these problems is to sort the papers according to your initial impressions. With your final grading criteria in mind, give each paper a quick read through. You will soon be able to recognize above average, average, and poor work. Create multiple stacks which reflect the relative quality of each paper. You can now go back and carefully evaluate (and resort) the papers within each small stack and assign grades which are truly representative of the quality of the student's work.

DID YOU KNOW...

Which hapless American politician first failed in business, then was defeated for the Legislature, failed in business again, suffered a nervous breakdown, was then defeated for Speaker, Elector, Congress, Senate, Vice President and Senate again, but wound up being elected President? Abraham Lincoln. No joke. So the next time a student cries, "This C will ruin my life!" just tell him or her the real story of good ol' Honest Abe. (It all gets you thinking--what's really in a grade?)

HOW TO HANDLE GRADE PROTESTS

by the TADP staff

Handling grade protests is even less fun than grading and can be as stressful as trying to talk a cop out of a ticket. So to help you deal with this potentially unpleasant task, we all put our heads together and pooled our collective university teaching and TAing experience of over 20 years.

The best way to handle grade protests is to prevent them, and the best ways to prevent them involve more than just grading carefully:

1. Give as many graded assignments, quizzes and exams as you can to reduce the importance of any single one. You can also give students the option of dropping the lowest scored test or assignment from the final grade calculations.

2. Explain your scoring/grading policy on all graded work in advance. Illustrate with sample questions, essays, lab reports, etc., showing exactly how points are given and subtracted.

3. When you are grading, explain why an essay, report or paper merits only partial credit (or none) and mention what's missing.

4. When you return graded material, ask everyone to check your scoring arithmetic.

5. Go over scoring procedures in section, giving the reasons why an answer is right or wrong.

6. Better yet (with your professor's permission), pass out copies of the key to your students, or put copies on reserve at the library. Particularly for multiple choice items that gave anyone trouble, indicate why the correct answer is the one correct answer vs. other popular wrong ones.

7. If almost the whole class missed a certain objective question, throw it out. (It's bad.)

8. When you return graded material, announce a policy that you will consider regrading requests for a limited time only (e.g., the next week) and require students to write out their rationales for rescoring an item or essay. Or, less amicably, insist on regrading the entire essay section, paper or report--since if you made an error in one place, you might have made one in another.

9. If you assign A-B-C-D-F grades to midterms, quizzes, lab reports, etc., based on numerical scores, don't show the curve to the class (only to individual students on demand). Some students will fight for additional points here and there just to raise their grades. But since they may compare scores and grades anyway, try to set grade cut-offs at "holes" in the point distribution.

10. Emotions run their highest right after tests and papers are returned. So tell your students you can't even discuss regrading requests right after class.

Of course even the best prevention will yield you at best a lot fewer grade protests. So don't feel bad if you regularly get a couple; that's normal. Besides, some of them are perfectly legitimate. We all miss a few, or misunderstand, or need to reconsider. The "fine art" is in separating the wheat from the chaff.

So when a student complies with your regrading request policy and has a valid point, graciously agree and even thank the student for bringing the oversight to your attention. You don't "give anything away" when you let justice prevail. If you're not certain the student's point is valid, see your professor or another TA for a second opinion.

Problems may arise only when you don't concur with the student's contention after s/he has followed your request policy. In this case:

1. Give the student a detailed, written justification for your not accepting his or her argument.

2. If the student persists, make at least three copies of the question(s) or assignment, the student's work at issue, the key, the curve, his or her regrading rationale and your response.

3. Meet with the student by appointment. NEVER, EVER act angry or irritated. (Really, this isn't your problem.) Follow up your firm "no" by telling the student where to proceed if s/he chooses to take the issue further: first, to your professor; if necessary, then to a joint professor-TA-student meeting; and finally to the campus Ombudsman. (If you get harassed, remember, the Ombudsman is there for you, too.)

4. Alert your professor and provide him/her with a full set of copies. Save the other sets to distribute as necessary. (It probably won't be necessary.)

Parting Words: You're accountable to your professor for grading, but your professor is accountable to the University for grades. They are his or her final decision--not yours. Ultimately, they aren't your problem. Covering your backside (CYA) is, however. So aim for prevention, follow procedure and don't get emotionally involved

The TADPole is published quarterly by the Teaching Assistant Development Program

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Linda Nilson: Director, TADP

DID YOU KNOW...

That if your department can't give you a TAship or RAship for a quarter, you can be "loaned out" to another department that has fewer graduate students than it has support opportunities to fill? You can only cross over to a substantively related department, and these appointments are usually last-minute. But they do pay the rent. Check with your Graduate Secretary to find out about available options.

GRADING LAB REPORTS

by Merri Lynn Lacey

Grading laboratory reports is a time-consuming chore. It is also the one thing you will do which will most impact every one of your students. As a TA, your grading concerns should include 1) the amount of time you will spend grading, 2) the equity with which you grade and, most important, 3) the educational value of your grading--that is, what the students will learn from your evaluation of their work. What you do before and after an assignment can reduce the "chore" aspect of grading and help you to address these concerns.

First, clearly define a standard of good scientific writing for your field. Provide examples from the literature or past classes. To ensure students know the difference between an abstract and a results section, make short, written, evaluated-not-graded assignments covering a single section of a paper. This will give students practice in writing and allow you to troubleshoot problems. Having students pre-write a flowchart for a lab exercise is another way to help them organize their thoughts and write in a logical, connected fashion. Again, review it to diagnose misunderstandings and confusion.

In making an assignment, you should establish your grading criteria and policies in advance, preferably in writing. Let students know the form and content you expect. Is the report to be typed, double-spaced, with numbered references? Should there be an abstract, material and methods, discussion? Specify the graphs, tables, drawings, etc. you expect to see in order to direct students' efforts towards interpreting the data. To avoid lab reports that appear plagiarized, consider a grading policy that allows co-authorship by lab partners, or requires that the introduction and/or discussion section of the report be an individual effort.

To make the exercise of preparing a lab report meaningful, the student should learn something about both the experimental topic and the process of writing in science. Your comments, both positive and negative, will provide the feedback that is vital to this learning process and that may make your job easier next time around. At a minimum, consider providing students with a checklist that outlines the grading criteria and point distribution. You can also create annotated examples of a "perfect paper" complied from the current class's work. Margin notes are another effective, although time-consuming, way to address specific details of a student's work. In the interest of time, restrict your comments to form and content, and refer students to the Writing Lab for help with English and grammar. Making constructive comments gives your grading meaning.

NEXT ISSUE: You won't read it in your job description. Or in your professors' or students' eyes. But you will in the Winter '91 issue of the The TADPole: "What a TA's Expected to Be." You'll hear from the faculty, undergraduates, the new TA who's learning the ropes of the role and TAs who exceeded everyone's expectations--some of the 1989-90 Outstanding TA Awards recipients.

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November 13, 1989

Mr. Brian Lekander
Fund for the Improvement of
Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education
Mail Stop Number 51/75
7th & D Streets S.W., Room 3100
Washington, D. C 20202-5175

Dear Brian:

To keep you fully informed of UCR's FIPSE grant activities, I have prepared and am submitting an "End-of-Fall-Quarter-1989 Report" with a full set of supporting materials (e.g., letters and memos to all new TAs, programs of events, enrollment sheets, evaluation forms, quantitative evaluation results, etc.). Only sections I, II and III can be completed at this time. Section IV will follow in January 1990, along with the first issue of the TADP newsletter, The TADPole (Winter 1990). While designed for a teaching assistant readership, this premier issue will be distributed to all graduate students, faculty and administrators as well.

On the bottom of the stack of supporting materials, you will also find "A Week-by-Week List of Things-To-Do Through Winter Quarter 1990" (2 pages on bright red), an informal memo to all TADP staff distributed at our last weekly staff meeting on Thursday, November 9. It is fairly typical of the kind of documentation I prepare to direct operations and paperflows. This particular memo demonstrates my efforts to streamline procedures and paperwork, as well as to save over $200 in videotape expenses.

Please take note that I am initiating an alternative to TA section videotapings: in-laboratory section observations by the MTAs. Our MTA from the Biology Department suggested this option for purely practical reasons. The lab TA usually opens a section with a ten-minute introductory lecture, then moves about the laboratory helping individual students and monitoring safety procedures. A video camera cannot move about the lab to adequately capture the interactions, but an MTA easily can. So TADP will try out this live observation format with lab section TAs. We hope that this new procedure meets with your approval.

Since my October 30 letter to you, I've discussed our TA evaluation data analysis plans with the Associate Director of Institutional Computing. Due to the complexities of the numerous select-if functions required, she was not optimistic about analyzing differences between TADP-trained and department-trained TAs. She was also concerned about some department-trained samples being too small. However, she saw no problem conducting a Spring Quarter 1988 to Spring Quarter 1990 comparison (pre-TADP-trained vs. post-TADP-trained TAs). In fact, we are extremely fortunate to have the Spring 1988 evaluations on data file. These data are normally destroyed: Spring 1988 data were preserved only by a fluke. The Graduate Division will assist us in selecting out first-year and second-year TAs for the desired comparisons.

Later this week, I will fly to Seattle, Washington to attend the Second National Conference on the Training and Employment of Teaching Assistants at the Stouffer Madison Hotel, November 15-18. This travel is mandated in our FIPSE budget. I am looking forward to this opportunity to further enrich the UCR TA Development Program.

Very truly yours,

Linda B. Nilson

Linda B. Nilson, Ph.D.
Director

Encl: Report and Supporting Material
Winter Quarter Things-To-Do

cc: Dora Marcus
Dr. Leland Shannon
Dr. Darold Holten

END-OF-FALL-QUARTER-1989 REPORT TO FIPSE

GRADUATE EDUCATION:

TURNING GRADUATE STUDENTS INTO PROFESSORS

Grant #P116B80227-89 - Second Year

Linda B. Nilson, Ph.D., Director
Teaching Assistant Development Program
1110 Library South
University of California, Riverside
Riverside, CA 92521
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An Evaluative Summary of TADP's Major Events and Activities

Fall Quarter, 1989:

I. TA Orientation

II. "Super Saturday" TA Training

III. Five-Week Training Seminars

IV. Overall Program/Teaching Excellence & Videotape Experience

I. Evaluations of the 1989 TA Orientation

The TADP organized and hosted the annual, all-day TA Orientation held from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 22, 1989. Nine days before this event, all new TAs received notification (blue memo letterhead) that their attendance was required. The same memo also informed them of their required enrollment in a TA training program/seminar (departmental, TADP's "Super Saturday" or TADP's five-week seminars). The mailing included an Application for Enrollment in one of the TA training options (salmon sheet) and a TA Orientation program (goldenrod).

From an administrative point of view, the TA Orientation came off remarkably well. We say "remarkably" because the new Director had precisely three weeks on the job to plan most of the event, including supervising the extensive editing and revision of the TA handbook, Teaching Excellence, which was distributed to all new TAs during Orientation registration. The all-day "Super Saturday" TA training also had to be organized during the same three weeks.

In fact, the only apparent "malfunctions" in the TA Orientation's operations were minor: 1) Registration ran ten minutes too long, due to too many (three) sign-up stations. The Director has learned that these can be cut back to one. 2) Four TAs wanted vegetarian lunches, which can easily be ordered on request next time. Campus Food Services otherwise catered a fine subsandwich and salad lunch with beverages, as well as a morning continental breakfast and a late afternoon reception with cheese, chips, vegetables, dips, and beverages. Due to reception's relatively light attendance and relatively high cost, it will be dropped from subsequent TA Orientations.

From the new TAs' viewpoint as well, the TA Orientation was a hugh success. All participants received a goldenrod TA Orientation Evaluation Form to fill out and turned in at the end of the day, and 105 of these forms were actually collected. This number falls below the informal morning headcount of approximately 160 in attendance for two reasons: 1) Several of those present were faculty and staff observers. 2) The Departments of Chemistry and Math/Computer Science held departmental TA Orientations or training events during the afternoon of the same day. So many of these TAs did not complete and turn in their evaluations forms.

As the enclosed evaluation forms shows, each part of the Orientation was rated on a 1 (lowest)-to-7 (highest) scale on 1) quality of presentation and 2) expected usefulness in teaching. Also included were space for comments and open-ended questions soliciting suggestions for improvement.

Overall, the TA Orientation earned mean ratings of 5.72 for quality of presentation and 5.46 for expected usefulness. As previous orientations were not evaluated, no comparative conclusions may be drawn. But the TADP staff was very pleased with these results and the thoughtful, constructive nature of the critical comments offered.

The top-rated parts for quality of presentation were Creative Teaching Strategies at 6.15 (afternoon workshop presented by Dr. Pamela Clute, Professor of Education, UCR); Every TA's Nightmares at 6.10 (Second General Session, five vignettes scripted and performed by the TADP staff and directed by Roger Hayes, Senior Learning Skills Counselor, The Learning Center, UCR; Mr. Hayes also led the discussion after each

vignette) and Equity in the Classroom at 5.95 (First General Session, 26-minute video, "Minorities in the College Classroom," with Director's commentary).

For expected usefulness, the top-rated units were Creative Teaching Strategies at 5.77, Every TA's Nightmares at 5.50 and Questioning Techniques at 5.41 (afternoon workshop presented by Alan Oda, TADP Master TA, and Dr. Linda Nilson, TADP Director).

The open-ended comments on these events were all overwhelming positive. Creative Teaching Strategies evoked praise as enthusiastic as "fantastic" and mild criticism (from eight of the 84 participants) only for focusing too exclusively on math and science examples. Every TA's Nightmares (all performed by rank amateur actors) won rave reviews for being well done, useful and funny. Only ten TAs suggested modestly shortening the unit. A few also proposed that discussion follow the Equity in the Classroom video--the Director's original plan cut short by the too-lengthy registration. As all three of these units were so successful, they will be repeated in subsequent TA Orientations with all of the minor improvements that the TAs suggested.

While highly praised for its utility, Questioning Techniques struck eight of the 73 TAs who attended as disorganized, possibly because it was presented in two separate parts by different individuals. As Dr. Nilson presented her half after Mr. Oda, she tied her questioning techniques into his. But perhaps a few TAs missed these connections. Mr. Oda also conducted an ice-breaker interaction activity to open the workshop. Only four TAs disliked the "game," and the TADP staff still considers it a valuable 15 minute exercise.

In any case, Questioning Techniques will be reserved for the TA training seminars, specifically those designed for social science and philosophy TAs, who rely on discussion-provoking questions in their sections. The Director prefers to make the TA Orientation a truly interdisciplinary event and will replace Questioning Techniques with a workshop on information and activities for a section's first meeting.

In the open-ended evaluation questions, the TAs again complimented three of the four top-rated units. Twenty-eight respondents applauded Every TA's Nightmares and 12 cited Questioning Techniques as "the very best parts of the TA Orientation." Among "the most important things you learned or gained from the TA Orientation" were listed questioning techniques (11 mentions), what to expect in sections (nine), how to deal with students and faculty (eight), confidence (seven) and creative teaching strategies (six).

Shifting to the lowest-rated parts of the TA Orientation, we found, in quality of presentation: Preventing Sexual Harassment at 5.24, (First General Session, lecture and brief video presented by Barbara Gardner, Director of the Women's Resource Center, UCR and Peggy Kerley, Affirmative Action Officer, UCR): Safety in Science Laboratories at 5.12 (afternoon workshop with video presented by Dr. Darold Holten, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division and Professor of Biochemistry, UCR), Campus Resource Fair at 4.97 (a series of display tables set up by 15 student services and activities centers); and the International TA at UCR at 4.95 (afternoon workshop presented by Diane Elton, Director of the International Services Center, UCR).

For expected usefulness, the lowest-rated units were Safety in Science Laboratories at 5.00, Preventing Sexual Harassment at 4.73 and the Campus Resource Fair at 4.38.

In the open-ended comments, Preventing Sexual Harassment was the only topic frequently mentioned (14 times) as "overemphasized. Some TAs also criticized it for being "scary" (two mentions) and boring"/"dry"/"too long" (13 mentions). The TADP staff quite agrees and will pare the presentation down from 35-40 minutes to 15 minutes at the next TA Orientation. This briefer treatment seems more appropriate, especially in light of additional treatments given at the Orientation (a lengthy brochure and a TADPole Players' vignette).

While inherently not an exciting subject, Safety in Science Laboratories is an essential one for new laboratory science TAs. In fact, the written comments on the workshops were generally positive so, it will be retained in later Orientations.

The Campus Resource Fair will not be, however. Organizing the fair proved to be a considerable drain on TADP staff time, and some campus resource personnel were lax in meeting their responsibilities. In addition, the TAs' response was so indifferent as to inspire no written commentary. As it is, the TA handbook, Teaching Excellence, a supplementary additional TADP handout and three TADPole Players' vignettes provide sufficient information on these campus resources and referral services. So the fair itself will be deleted from the TA Orientation.

The International TA at UCR also evoked little commentary. But two international TAs volunteered that they felt uncomfortable with at least one of the workshop

exercises. For later TA Orientations, the Director has already enlisted Linda Cline, a UCR Learning Skills Counselor who specializes in English language skills for international students, to co-conduct the international TA workshop with Ms. Elton. The activities that Ms. Cline plans are less likely to cause discomfort.

The only other major unit on the evaluation form was Dr. Nilson's opening remarks. (Dr. Holten also delivered a welcome not listed on the form.) This intorduction earned a 5.48 for presentation and 19 positive written comments. (It were not rated for expected usefulness.) Four TAs resented their occasional "cheerleading" tone, but the Director believes an inspirational message on college teaching provides an appropriate opening to the Orientation. She will trim her opening remarks from 15 to ten minutes, however, and will ask Dr. Holten to do likewise as four TAs found the introductions too long.

Interestingly, in response to the on overemphasized topics, question, ten TAs bothered to write "nothing." Similarly, the TAs could offer few ways to improve the TA Orientation. Six suggested more afternoon workshops, so TADP plans to offer five or six instead of four. One on first-section activities will replace Questioning Techniques, which will be integrated into the training seminars, and at least one workshop will be added: For the TA with Two-Plus Years Teaching Experience: Adjusting to UCR. As one TA who voluntarily signed her name to her form recommended adding a workshop on teaching/educational philosophies, the Director is seriously considering the idea.

The only other suggested improvement was to shorten the TA Orientation. So the Director plans to modify the day's schedule. The next Orientation will start an hour

later at 9:00 a.m. with general sessions from 9:15 to 11:00 a.m. and from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. After a one-hour lunch break from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., the two afternoon workshops will each run 75 minutes instead of 60 minutes--1:30 to 2:45 p.m., and 3:00 to 4:15 p.m., plus 15 minutes to fill out evaluations. But the event overall will be cut by a half hour.

Six other TAs also wrote comments in response to requests for improvements, and they simply said "thank you." Their appreciation adds to the TADP staff's confidence that the 1989 TA Orientation achieved its major objectives. With the minor modifications discussed above, the 1990 event will be an even greater success.

II. Evaluations of 1989 "Super Saturday" TA Training.

This intensive, full-day training seminar, held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 23, 1989, was organized by the TADP in response to the requests of several departments. The felt need for this condensed TA training no doubt reflected these departments' opposition to last year's required 20 hours of seminar training (over ten weeks). As these hours were cut back to ten (over five weeks) this academic year, the TADP followed through with the "Super Saturday" training alternative primarily as a conciliatory gesture to the departments. Since it is no longer necessary and it proved too mentally exhausting for both the participating TAs and the TADP staff, it will no longer be offered. Therefore, this evaluative summary will be brief.

As the appended program (salmon) shows, the Director and each of the four Master TAs conducted a different workshop. The TADP staff concurred that these five topics were essential ones and were not sufficiently covered at the TA Orientation or in Teaching Excellence. The MTAs drew on several sources to develop their workshops and supporting materials: 1) two weeks of MTA training (September 5-15); 2) handouts developed and provided by Dr. Nilson (from The TA Handbook she wrote in 1981 for her UCLA Department of Sociology TA Training Program); 3) books on teaching techniques from Dr. Nilson's professional library; and 4) the MTAs' own teaching libraries and experiences. Each 75-minute workshop was presented twice to keep each class under 25. Forty-four TAs actually attended and 38 evaluation forms were processed (also salmon). The quantitative data summary (white) is also enclosed.

Overall, the "Super Saturday" TA training received mean scores of 4.75 in quality of presentation and 4.76 in expected usefulness on the same 1-to-7 scale as in the TA Orientation evaluations. The workshops' mean ratings varied, respectively, from 5.76 and 5.24 for Establishing the Proper Classroom Atmosphere and Control (presented by MTA Jadis Blurton) to 3.60 and 4.16 for Preparing Students for Tests and Grading Tests presented by MTA Elsa Valdez). The Director visited all the workshops in progress and provided the MTAs with her written evaluations. They tend to parallel those of the TAs.

The TAs found "the very best parts of the training" to be Establishing the Proper Classroom Atmosphere and Control (seven mentions) and Alternative Teaching Strategies (presented by MTA Alan Oda, six mentions). Six especially appreciative TAs wrote "all" under "best parts."

The question on "the most important things you learned or gained from the training" prompted answers praising other workshop topics as well: How to Motivate Students (seven mentions); how to teach to different learning/processing styles (six), and how to prepare for sections (four). Many other TAs also credited the training with making them feel more comfortable and confident about teaching.

Overall, however, the event was justifiably criticized for being too long, too tiring and too much all at once--problems inherent in an intensive one-day format. Seven TAs suggested that waivers be granted for those with previous teaching experience. The Director agrees and is instituting training exemptions for TAs with two or more years of college or senior high school teaching experience. (Only 5% to 8% of all new TAs will qualify.)

Six TA comments were critical of the interdisciplinary, one-size-fits-all nature of the training. Laboratory science, foreign language and dance/art TAs were particularly disenchanted. Four even suggested offering different TA training programs for the sciences and the humanities. In concurrence with these remarks, the Director submitted a preliminary application to FIPSE last October to reorganize TA training at UCR into four disciplinary clusters. TA section formats and activities vary considerably by disciplinary group, and a campuswide TA training program should accommodate and respect these disciplinary differences.

III. Evaluations of the Fall 1989 Five-Week TA Training Seminars

The packet of materials sent to all new TAs in mid-September 1989 advertised the five-week seminars as preferable to the "Super Saturday" alternative. Each seminar held weekly, two-hour meetings during the first five weeks of Fall Quarter, allowing ten full hours of class time vs. 6.25 hours of "Super Saturday" training.

Each of the four MTAs conducted his or her own seminar. But they all coordinated on topical units to bring uniformity to the training program. All four seminars covered the following topics:

Preparation for a First Day
Setting the Classroom Atmosphere
Motivating Your Students
Preparing Students for Tests
Grading
Alternative Teaching Strategies
Teaching to Different Processing Styles

In addition, one or more of the MTAs added units from this list of topics:

Review of the First Day
Control in the Class
Questioning Techniques
Leading a Discussion Group

Teaching Values

Dealing with the Emotionally Distressed Student

Pedogogy

Alternative Teaching Strategies II

On a few occasions, one MTA guest-conducted a specialized unit in another MTA's seminar. Three out of the four MTAs also invited Dr. Nilson to conduct a 60-to-80 minute unit on Teaching to Different Processing Styles.

The topical overlap between these seminars and "Super Saturday" reflected a concerted effort towards training uniformity. But it is evident that the seminars were able to could cover a wider range of teaching areas.

The seminars were offered on Tuesday mornings 7:30-9:30 a.m., Tuesday evenings 7:00-9:00 p.m., Thursday mornings 7:30-9:30 a.m. and Thursday evenings 7:00-9:00 p.m. The morning seminars understandably drew lower enrollments (3 and 6) than the evening ones (13 and 8).

These figures represent the number of TAs who successfully completed each Fall Quarter seminar, for a total of 30. However, overall enrollment started out as 42. Of the "missing" 12 TAs, four applied and qualified for exemptions (i.e., documented two or more years of previous teaching experience at the college or senior high school level); five were rescheduled to begin their TAships in Winter or Spring Quarters (they will take the seminar later); one left graduate school; and two stopped attending without explanation. These two will receive a N/C ("no credit") in the seminar and will have to repeat it to retain their TAships.

Not surprisingly, all four seminars achieved much higher evaluations than did the "Super Saturday" training. Overall, in quality of presentation and usefulness in teaching, the four seminars earned these mean scores, respectively (same 1-to-7 scale as above): 5.20 and 5.40, 5.40 and 5.20, 5.76 and 5.46, and 6.3 and 6.0. The various units within each of the four seminar were similarly evaluated and received mean scores within these ranges: 4.00-6.25 in presentation and 4.66-5.75 in usefulness; 4.80-6.40 in presentation and 5.00-6.00 in usefulness; 5.41-6.27 in presentation and 5.00-5.72 in usefulness; and 5.30-6.30 in both presentation and usefulness. The highest rated units overall were Preparation for a First Day, Heading a Discussion Group and Grading. The lowest rated were Motivating Your Students, Preparing Students for Tests and Pedagogy. Alternative Teaching Strategies and Teaching to Different Processing Styles merited some of the highest and a few of the lowest ratings, depending upon the seminar and the evaluation dimension.

While the inter-seminar variations were small, it is worth noting that the top-rated seminar on both presentation and usefulness was the only one that attempted the disciplinary cluster approach to TA training. At the Director's request, the MTA who conducted it--a graduate student in biology--tailored it to laboratory science TAs. The materials sent to all new TAs advertised the seminar as such. And, as hoped, all those who enrolled were laboratory science TAs. Their responses to open-ended questions also reflected their appreciation of the disciplinary cluster orientation. In particular, none of the TAs felt that any topics were underemphasized or overemphasized. Nor could they suggest any ways to improve the training.

By contrast, four TAs in two of the other three interdisciplinary seminars critiqued the training for its lack of disciplinary focus and relevance, and/or suggested adopting

a more disciplinary approach. At least one was a laboratory science TA who was unable (for scheduling reasons) to attend the science-oriented seminar.

Still, most of the TAs' open-ended comments praised the seminars for both their presentational and their substantive quality. The topics most often mentioned as "the very best parts" or "the most important things you learned or gained" were Preparation for the First Day, Motivating Students, Alternative Teaching Strategies, Teaching to Different Processing Styles, Grading, Dealing with the Emotionally Distressed Student, Leading a Discussion Group and a self-evaluation exercise. TAs also cited learning how to deal with a variety of everyday problems, gaining classroom confidence and acquiring an understanding of the teaching enterprise and the undergraduate mind. One TA recommended a greater emphasis on professor-TA relations; another, more concrete examples; another, less theory; another, more theory; another, more TA participation. But, overall, the new TAs found all the seminars, especially the disciplinary cluster seminar, extremely valuable in launching their new teaching careers.

IV. Evaluations of the Program Overall.

TAs cannot complete the appropriate overall evaluation forms until their sections have been videotaped and their formative videotape viewing and evaluation sessions with MTAs are completed. Tapings are scheduled up through Friday, December 1 and viewing sessions, through Friday, December 22. The MTA office/viewing hours grid is enclosed (goldenrod).

Therefore, this section of the report cannot be completed until all the final evaluation forms are collected, then analyzed and summarized. As soon as the results are compiled, the Director will comp this section and forward it to FIPSE.